

And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves; and he was transfigured before them, and his garments became glistening, intensely white, as no fuller on earth could bleach them.

Mark 9:2-3

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost +

In speaking about the Ascension someone said to me, Jesus must have been cold. You lose 2 degrees Celsius for every 1000 feet you rise – The statement may be true but it is irrelevant. We are talking about God and what God is doing.

Some may ask about Jesus rising up into the clouds. We don't really believe that heaven is up in the sky any more do we? The question is irrelevant; we are talking about God and what God is doing.

Someone may even begin to consider the energy it takes to escape the gravity of earth. The space shuttle needs the huge external tank and two solid rocket boosters to do so. Good point, but it is irrelevant; we are talking about God and what God is doing.

While we try to understand in a human way the mystery of God's Work we can never lose sight of the fact that we are contemplating **God's Work**.

In the economy of Salvation it was God's desire to save us and set us free. He sent His son to us, and Jesus emptied himself into human form. We know how it happened, but we cannot explain how it happened.

The creeds tell us that Jesus was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary. That's what happened, but no one can actually explain how Mary the Mother of God conceived the child Jesus except to say that it was accomplished by God and it is a mystery.

As so it is with all of the miraculous events in the life and ministry of Jesus. How did He walk on water, calm the storm, raise the dead, change water in wine, heal the leper, give sight to the blind or restore hearing and speech? We know what he did but we cannot explain how. We can only marvel as the mysterious and glorious Work of God.

So is that the end of our contemplation concerning the Ascension of the Lord? Do we fail to offer a human explanation for the event and so file it away as unknowable and thus not worth further thought?

Of course not, that would be to say that we recognize the miracles performed by God through the ministry of His Son, but we do not consider them as anything but historical events.

Our faith is and the faith of the church is renewed and strengthened every time we ponder the mystery of God. We and people of faith in every generation must read, mark and inwardly digest what is presented to us in the Bible as God's truth and that means we must ponder the miracles as well the prophesy and the history recorded for us.

So what does the Ascension teach us. As when Jesus took Peter, James and John up the Holy Mountain and was Transfigured before them. Jesus is revealing something about His nature and about the nature of the Godhead in the Ascension.

When the Son of God emptied Himself to become human the incarnation was hidden from our view. It was not possible for us to behold God the Son before the incarnation. In

taking on human nature along with the divine nature God allowed us to see, touch and experience God in a way never before possible.

In the resurrection the human body of Jesus was not reanimated, as was Lazarus when Jesus raised him from death. But the Resurrection Glorified the human body of Jesus. It may have been similar to the Transfiguration because in the transfiguration Peter, James and John were allowed to see Jesus as He really exists, as the Son of God.

In the Resurrection and Ascension we are witness to the reality of Jesus. In rises and returning to the Father the Gospel of John tells us what happened to Jesus. Jesus teaching the disciples of his departure from this world says these words in John 17:5 *Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made.*

These words are truly profound and worthy of our long contemplation.

All that I have said to you this day leads me to this one point.

The Son of God existed from the beginning, before all worlds, time and everything that has or will come into existence. It is then He was with the Father and filled with the Glory of God. In the Ascension we have Jesus carrying the human form in the Gloried Body of Resurrection back to the Father.

It is for us to rejoice that that second person of the Blessed Trinity is in fact the perfect human, Jesus the Christ. It is for this reason that the author of the Hebrews tells us that we have hope because Jesus has gone to be seated at the right hand of the Father. In Hebrews 4:14-15 we read:

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Our hope in immortality is based on the forgiveness of our sins through the blood of Jesus.

Our faith rests in the knowledge that we will receive mercy and not judgment when we stand before the Throne of Grace.

That fact is based on our knowledge that our Great High Priest Jesus the Christ who is both completely human and completely divine, who rose from the Grave and Ascended into heaven.

We can neither explain why nor understand how and thanks be to God that we do not need to understand, we need only to believe.

AMEN