

Ascensiontide Message from the Presiding Bishop

¹⁹ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰ Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matt 28:19-20)



⁹ And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; ¹¹ Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. (Acts 1:9-11)

It is comforting to know the promises of God to be, and remain, with His people were fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. Prior to the Advent of Christ, the Holy Ghost was given discreetly to the prophets and other men of God for the purpose of transmitting God's

Word to the people and to utter words of prophecy, comfort, and counsel. However since the coming of Christ, the people of God have not been without the Presence of God among them – either through the bodily ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, or the comforter whom He sent after His Ascension. It is in that way that the Lord's promise to be with us *"always, even unto the end of the world"* realizes fulfillment.

As He counseled Peter, James, and John, we must watch and wait prayerfully during His nearness to us in the Garden. But we have the Holy Ghost as God with us at all times. The Holy Ghost is also the emissary of Jesus and, in that sense, the Lord, too, is with us at all times. Unlike Peter, when separated from Christ on the night of His betrayal, we have great courage because we are no longer separated – there is no longer a division of God's people from God. It is for this reason that the Temple Veil was rent from top to bottom at the moment of Christ's death – the moment that He paid the full price for our redemption. No longer was an intermediary needed for the people of God to approach the Mercy Seat. Christ is that Mercy Seat!

In our waiting and watching, we are not to be idly sleeping, but rather searching the fields for the harvest. Our Church has missions all over the world some of which risk their lives daily to be called by the name of Christ. Knowing this, our hearts should be fervent to stand with them. If we will not stand upon God's Word in a time of plenty and safety, how shall we stand at a time of grave danger and calamity!

The sands of time fall constantly day by day. Each of us has an hour glass of our lives. We may see the grains at the bottom of the glass, but those at the top are hidden to our view. It is for this reason that we must be ready every day, every hour, and every minute for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in great glory! When the last grain falls in our hour-glass, the world may continue for a time before the Lord returns; but when that last grain falls in YOUR hour-glass, He has just come for you!

Let us face these wicked times with renewed ardor and commitment. Even is the whole world rots, let us at least be the salt and light that heals and preserves.

In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, AMEN.

Jerry L. Ogles
Presiding Bishop
Anglican Orthodox Worldwide Communion