

*"he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty*

### **Biblical Evidence:**

The Ascension of Jesus is explicitly mentioned in Luke 24:50-53 and Acts 1:9-11.

It is *implied or referenced* in Mark 16:19, John 20:17, Ephesians 4:8-10, Hebrews 4:14, and 1 Timothy 3:16.

### Old Testament Prophecies and Foreshadowing

While the Old Testament does not explicitly mention the Ascension of Jesus, there are several passages that Christians interpret as foreshadowing or prophesying this event:

#### **Psalm 68:18:**

"You ascended on high, leading a host of captives in your train and receiving gifts among men, even among the rebellious, that the Lord God may dwell there."

This verse is seen as a prophecy of the Messiah's ascension and is referenced in the New Testament in Ephesians 4:8.

#### **Daniel 7:13-14:**

"I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."

This vision is often interpreted as a prophecy of Jesus' ascension and His exaltation.

### **Fathers of the Church:**

#### St. Augustine of Hippo:

*"For the disciples were so affected at His death, that they were not in heart to believe in His resurrection; and when they did see Him, they still doubted. Hence it was necessary that He should still further confirm the faith of His resurrection, by showing Himself to them during forty days, speaking to them of the kingdom of God, and eating and drinking with them; that they might thereby believe that He was the same who had been crucified and buried, and not some other; and thus be prepared to behold His ascension from earth into heaven."* (Sermon on the Ascension)

#### St. John Chrysostom:

*"Today our Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven; let our hearts ascend with Him. Listen to the words of the Apostle: 'If you have risen with Christ, set your hearts on the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God; seek the things that are above, not the things that are on earth.'"* (Homily on the Ascension)

#### St. Gregory of Nyssa:

*"By ascending to heaven, Christ made manifest the way for all flesh. He tore the handwriting of the sin of Adam, and joined earth to heaven by His own divine body."* (Sermon on the Ascension)

### **Saints:**

**St. Thérèse of Lisieux:** St. Thérèse found comfort in knowing that Jesus prepared a place for her in heaven, signifying the personal relationship and individual care Jesus has for each soul. *"The splendor of the rose and the whiteness of the lily do not rob the little violet of its scent nor the daisy of its simple charm. If every tiny flower wanted to be a rose, spring would lose its loveliness"* (**Story of a Soul**). Her metaphor of flowers illustrates the diversity and beauty of God's creation, showing

that every person has a unique role and beauty in God's kingdom. The idea that "*if every tiny flower wanted to be a rose, spring would lose its loveliness*" teaches us that each person's unique gifts and path to holiness are valuable and contribute to the beauty of the whole Church.

### **Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 659-667):**

The CCC explains the theological significance of the ascension, stating that it marks the definitive entrance of Jesus' humanity into divine glory. This means that Jesus' human nature is now fully participating in the divine life, and it signifies the future glorification of all humanity. The ascension is not just a departure, but an elevation of human nature to the divine, opening the doors for humans to share in the divine life.

### **Importance of the Ascension**

Theological Significance

#### **Completion of Jesus' Earthly Ministry:**

The Ascension marks the completion of Jesus' earthly ministry and His return to the Father.

#### **Exaltation and Glorification:**

Jesus' Ascension is His exaltation and glorification, affirming His divine nature and His role as Lord of all.

#### **Intercession:**

Jesus ascended to sit at the right hand of the Father, where He intercedes for believers, advocating on their behalf (Hebrews 7:25).

#### **Promise of the Holy Spirit:**

The Ascension was followed by the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, empowering the Church for its mission (John 16:7).

### **Practical Significance**

#### **Hope of Heaven:**

The Ascension gives believers hope that they too will be raised and exalted with Christ (Ephesians 2:6).

#### **Mission and Evangelism:**

Jesus' parting command to His disciples was to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth, inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

#### **Focus on Heavenly Things:**

We are encouraged to set our minds on things above, where Christ is seated, rather than on earthly things (Colossians 3:1-2).

The phrase "*and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty*" from the Apostles' Creed is rich with theological significance. The Church Fathers offered various interpretations and explanations of this phrase, emphasizing the authority, majesty, and intercessory role of Christ. Here are some key insights from several prominent Church Fathers:

#### 1. St. Augustine of Hippo

**Explanation:** St. Augustine, in his work "On the Creed," explains the significance of Jesus being seated at the right hand of the Father as a position of power and authority:

"He ascended into heaven: believe it. He is seated at the right hand of the Father: believe it. By 'sitting,' understand dwelling; as it is written: 'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool'

(Isaiah 66:1). That is, 'I sit in heaven, and dwell in heaven.' Understand 'sitting' as meaning 'dwelling,' for the sake of understanding a point of humility: lest you imagine that the right hand of the Father is a place in heaven, as if there God the Father sits on one throne and God the Son on another; for 'right hand' means 'power,' as in this text: 'Hereafter shall the Son of Man be seated at the right hand of the power of God' (Luke 22:69)." (Sermon 214)

**Significance:** Augustine emphasizes that the phrase is not to be taken literally but metaphorically, representing Jesus' sharing in the divine power and glory of the Father.

## 2. St. John Chrysostom

**Explanation:** St. John Chrysostom, in his homilies, frequently interprets Christ's seating at the right hand as an affirmation of His divinity and a position of honor and authority over all creation: "But what means, 'He sitteth on the right hand of the Father?' By 'the right hand,' understand the glory of God, the honor of the Father, the honor given to the Only-Begotten Son, who is set over all things that the Father hath created, who is in no wise less than the Father, who is His equal in all things, and who sitteth upon the same throne with Him, as God the Word." (Homily on Hebrews 1)

**Significance:** Chrysostom underscores the equality of the Son with the Father and His supreme authority over all creation.

## 3. St. Cyril of Jerusalem

**Explanation:** In his "Catechetical Lectures," St. Cyril of Jerusalem interprets Christ's seating at the right hand of the Father as a sign of His kingship and priestly role:

"He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. By this, understand in what honor the Only-Begotten Son of God is enthroned, reigning with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit. For sitting at the right hand signifies the glory, honor, and kingdom, which is in truth the kingdom of Christ our Lord." (Catechetical Lecture 14, Paragraph 27)

**Significance:** Cyril emphasizes the honor and kingship of Christ, showing that He reigns with the Father in glory and power.

## 4. St. Athanasius

**Explanation:** St. Athanasius, in his works against Arianism, highlights that Jesus sitting at the right hand of the Father signifies His exaltation and confirmation of His divine nature:

"We believe that the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, has ascended into the heavens, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. This is a position of preeminence, a place of dignity and honor, confirming His divinity and equality with the Father, thus overthrowing the blasphemy of the Arians who deny His Godhead." (Against the Arians, Discourse 1, Chapter 7)

**Significance:** Athanasius uses this article of the Creed to defend the divinity of Christ against Arianism, affirming that His seating at the right hand denotes His equal status with the Father.