

Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise

An Ascension Hymn

We learn in the first part of Acts that after His resurrection, Jesus presented Himself alive by many convincing proofs and spoke to His disciples about the things concerning the kingdom of God. After forty days, he was taken up into Heaven. "He was lifted up while they were looking on and a cloud received Him out of their sight." Acts 1:9b

Ascension day is traditionally celebrated on a Thursday, forty days after Easter. The following Sunday, the fifth after Easter, is commonly known as ascension Sunday. Ascension Sunday has given occasion for much musical composition including this month's hymn, "Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise."

Charles Wesley originally penned ten verses in the publication Hymns and Sacred Poems (1739). It was later paired with the Welsh tune Llanfair arranged by John Roberts and shortened to four modified verses by Thomas Cotterill in his Selection of Psalms and Hymns (1820). The alleluias were not added until 1852. This hymn's popularity waxes and wanes with the popularity of ascension observances. It was once considered as popular as "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing."

Verse One: Christ Enters Heaven

The first verse links the events of Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Ascension Sunday. Christ, the sacrificial lamb, rose first from the grave and then to the right hand of God. Scripture also relates these

events. In Luke 24:26 Jesus Himself explains the events of passion week in these terms, "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?"

Verse Two: Psalm 24

Verse two is a paraphrase of Psalm 24. "Lift up your heads, O gates... That the King of glory may come in!"

Psalm 24 speaks of one "mighty in battle" and the hymn writer reminds us that Christ was victorious over death and sin. Indeed, "He is the King of glory."

Verse Three: Heavenly Ministry

In Romans 8:34 we read, "Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us." Jesus still has an active ministry advocating for us even as He sits at the right hand of God.

Verse Four: Fix Your Eyes on Jesus

In verse four, we are encouraged to "[fix] our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." In chapter twelve, the writer of Hebrews cites the cross and ascension as our motivation for, "[laying] aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us." In light of the cross, we live not for ourselves, but for Christ. In light of the resurrection and ascension, we "run with endurance the race that is set before us."



*Hail the day that sees Him rise, Alleluia!
To His throne above the skies; Alleluia!
Christ, the Lamb for sinners giv'n, Alleluia!
Enters now the highest heav'n. Alleluia!*

*There for Him high triumph waits; Alleluia!
Lift your heads eternal gates, Alleluia!
He hath conquered death and sin, Alleluia!
Take the King of glory in! Alleluia!*

*See, He lifts His hands above! Alleluia!
See, He shows the prints of love! Alleluia!
Hark! The gracious lips bestow, Alleluia!
Blessings on His church below. Alleluia!*

*Lord, beyond our mortal sight, Alleluia!
Raise our hearts to reach Thy height, Alleluia!
There Thy face unclouded see, Alleluia!
Find our heav'n of heav'ns in Thee! Alleluia!*