



HOMILY ON THE ASCENSION

ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM¹

Translated by Dragoljub Garic

Introduction

Though known primarily for his exegetical homilies, in which he expounded the meaning of the Scriptures, St John Chrysostom also delivered a number of festal homilies and panegyrics on martyrs. These were originally preached on their annual feast days, many of which were already established in the liturgical calendar of the late-fourth-century church of Antioch. The translation presented here is a witness to one such occasion, namely the liturgical celebration of the feast of the Lord's Ascension, which took place at a large, local Christian cemetery, close to one of the main gates of the city. Based on this and other homilies by Chrysostom, it seems clear that this cemetery contained a number of martyria (shrines of martyrs) which may have meant a grave or casket preserving a martyr's remains, though it could also refer to a chapel dedicated to a martyr, where his or her relics would have been available for veneration. The first section of the homily reveals Chrysostom's habit of exhorting his congregation to visit these shrines for eucharistic celebrations outside of the days when specific martyrs were commemorated. Given that the homily was delivered in Antioch, it can be dated anywhere between the years 386 and 397, i.e., the time of Chrysostom's service in Antioch, before his move to Constantinople. It is the only authentic homily on the Ascension of the nineteen on this topic attributed to St John Chrysostom.

¹ CPG 4342, ed. Nathalie Rambault, *Homélies sur la Resurrection, l'Ascension et la Pentecôte II*, Sources Chrétiennes [=SC] 562 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2014), 148-198. Cf., also, the study of N. Rambault, "La fête de l'Ascension à Antioche d'après l'homélie de Jean Chrysostome *In Ascensionem Christi*," in Richard W. Bishop et al., eds., *Preaching after Easter: Mid-Pentecost, Ascension, and Pentecost in Late Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

The following is the first complete English translation, based on the critical edition of the Greek text by Nathalie Rambault (Sources Chrétiennes 562).²

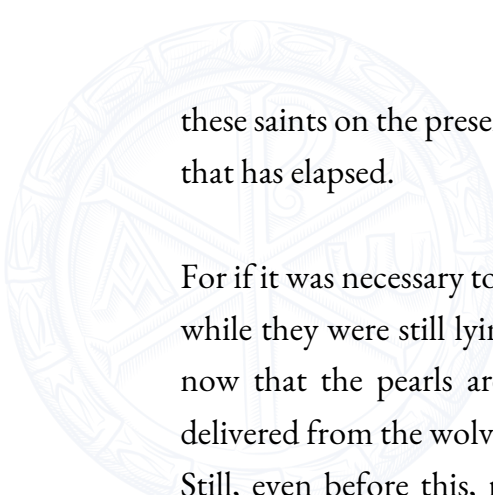


About the Translator

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When we were celebrating the commemoration of the cross, we celebrated the feast outside the city, and now as we commemorate the ascension of the Crucified One on this bright and brilliant day, we again celebrate the feast outside the city. We do so, not wishing to deprive the city of its honor, but in an eager pursuit to honor the martyrs, lest these saints reproach us and say, ‘Were we not worthy to see a single day of our Lord celebrated in the midst of our tabernacles?’ – or lest they reproach us and say, ‘Did we not shed our blood for His sake, and were we not worthy to have our heads cut off, and yet you did not count us worthy of seeing his day celebrated at our resting places?’ It is for these reasons that, having left the city, we have hastened to the feet of

² An older translation of sections two to five, based on PG 50:441-452, was printed in M.F. Toal, *Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*, vol. 2 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1958), 432-440.



these saints on the present day so that we may make it up to them for the time that has elapsed.

For if it was necessary to run to these noble athletes of piety even before now, while they were still lying underground, how much more should we do this now that the pearls are lying out on display, when the sheep have been delivered from the wolves, and when the living have parted from the dead. Still, even before this, no harm of defilement came to them by sharing in burial, for with their spirits abiding in the heavens their bodies were not violated by the place of entombment; with their soul in the hand of God, their relics suffered nothing from their interment. Even before now, no harm had come to them.

However, our people suffered no small difficulty regarding the places themselves, given that, while they were resorting to the relics of the martyrs, they were conducting their prayers with uncertainty and hesitation because they did not know the whereabouts of the saints' sepulchres or where the true treasures lay. And just as would happen to a flock of sheep that comes hastening toward fresh springs to enjoy pure streams, if a foul and stale odor from somewhere nearby were to befall it, they would turn back, so that is what happened to this flock. The people were approaching the pure springs of the martyrs, but having smelled the nearby stench of heresy, they turned away.³ So then, when he had grown aware of this problem, this wise shepherd and teacher to all, who arranges everything toward the edification of the Church, could no longer bear to ignore this source of trouble, being himself an ardent lover and zealot for the martyrs.⁴ But what was he to do?

Behold his wisdom: he buried the muddy and fetid streams and dammed them up, whereas the pure springs of the martyrs he transferred to a pure place. And consider how he showed such humanity in his treatment of the departed, such great honor toward the martyrs, and so much care for the

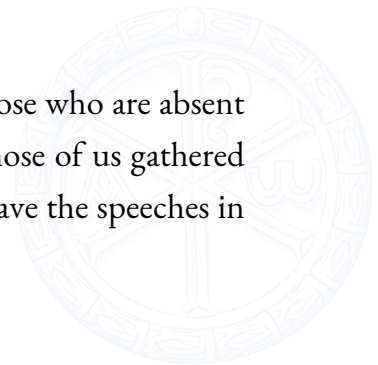
³ Reference to the burial of Arians in this neighborhood, cf. SC 562:153, n. 4.

⁴ Flavian, bishop of Antioch from 381 to 404, cf. SC 562:153, n. 5.

people! To the departed he showed the respect due to their humanity by not removing their bones but letting them rest in the same place, to the martyrs he showed honor by transferring them from a wicked neighborhood, and to the people he showed care by refusing to let them conduct their prayers with any doubt in mind.

That is why we have brought you here, so that the assembly would become more radiant and the spectacle more brilliant, since not only are the people here assembled, but also the martyrs; and not only martyrs, but also angels. Yes, indeed, angels too are present. And if you wish to see both martyrs and angels, open up the eyes of faith and you will behold this sight; for if the whole air is filled with angels, so is the Church even more so; and if this is true of the Church, all the more so on this present day when their Master is ascended. That you may know that all the air is filled with angels, listen to what Paul says when urging the women to have a covering for their heads, how women must have a veil on their heads *because of the angels* (1 Cor 11:10). And again Jacob: *The angel*, he says, *who has delivered me from my youth* (Gen 48:15). And those who were in the house with the apostles said to Rhoda about Peter, *It is his angel* (Acts 12:15). And once again Jacob: *I have seen the host of angels* (Gen 32:2). So what was the reason he saw the host and army of angels over the earth? Just as when a king orders garrisons to settle in each city to keep barbarian invasions from breaking out and overrunning the cities, so also, since in the midst of this air there are also demons, barbaric and savage, constantly stirring up wars and hostile to peace, God has set against them the hosts of angels, so that by their mere appearance they might subdue them to vouchsafe peace for us. And that you may learn that they are angels of peace, listen to the words that the deacons always repeat in their prayers: “Implore the angel of peace.” Do you see then how the angels are present, as well as the martyrs?

What then could be more wretched than being among those who are absent today? What could be more blessed than being among those of us gathered here for the enjoyment of this feast? Nevertheless, let us save the speeches in



honor of the martyrs for other occasions, and let us bring our homily back to the subject of the present feast.

2. What then is the present feast? It is venerable and great, O beloved, surpassing the human mind and worthy of the largesse of God who made it. For on this day has taken place the reconciliation between God and the human race; today, the ancient enmity and the lengthy war have been abolished; today, a wondrous peace has returned, one that was inconceivable before. For who could have hoped that God would reconcile himself with man? Not because the Master was ill-disposed toward man, but because the servant was negligent; not because the Lord was cruel, but because the slave was heedless.

Do you want to know how we provoked this lover of mankind, our gracious Master? And indeed it is right for you to learn about the cause of our former enmity with him, so that when you see us, the enemies and adversaries, restored to a state of honor, you may admire the benefactor's love for man; and so that you do not think that the change that came about was a result of our own achievements, but rather, by learning of the abundance of his grace, you should never cease to thank him for the greatness of his gifts.

Do you wish to learn, then, how we provoked the Master, who is a friend to man, who is gracious and good, and who arranges all things for the sake of our salvation? Once, he decided to completely destroy the human race and his anger at us was so great that he would have destroyed us along with our wives and children and the wild beasts and livestock and the whole earth. If you like, I will also let you hear the very decree, *For, he says, I will blot out man whom I made from the face of the earth, as well as the wild animals and the cattle, for I am grieved that I made man* (Gen 6:7).

Now, that you may understand that it was not our nature that he came to hate, but rather he was repulsed by our wickedness: after first saying, *I will blot out man whom I have made from the face of the earth*, he says to man, *A*

time for all men is come before me (Gen 6:13). Certainly, if he had hated man, he would not have spoken with him. But now you see him not only unwilling to do what he threatened, but even giving a defense, as Lord, to the servant, and conversing with him as if with a friend of equal standing; and he gives the reasons for the impending doom, not just for man to learn them, but so that by telling them to others he would make them more prudent. At any rate, as I was saying, the human race was acting so perversely beforehand that we were at risk of falling from the very face of the earth.

Nevertheless, we who proved ourselves unworthy of the earth have today been raised up to heaven; we who were not even worthy of authority below have ascended to the kingdom on high, surpassed the heavens, and assumed the royal throne; and that nature which the Cherubim were assigned to keep out of Paradise is today seated upon the Cherubim. But how did this great and wondrous event take place? How were we, who gave such offense, who proved ourselves unworthy of the earth, and who were stripped of the authority here below, raised to such great heights? How was the war brought to an end? How was the anger annulled? How?

Indeed, this is the amazing thing, that peace was brought about not by those who were unjustly angry at God, but that the same one who was justly angry with us is the one who advocated for us. For as it is said, *We are ambassadors for Christ, God making consolation through us* (2 Cor 5:20). What could this mean? That he who is insulted is the same one who advocates? Yes, for he is God and thus advocates for us like a loving father.

See then what happens: the mediator is the Son of him who makes consolation, not a human, nor an angel, nor an archangel, nor any servant. And what does the mediator do? The work of the mediator. Just as when two people turn their backs on each other and do not wish to be reconciled, someone else must come to intervene and break down the enmity between them, so this is what Christ did. God was angry with us, we had turned away

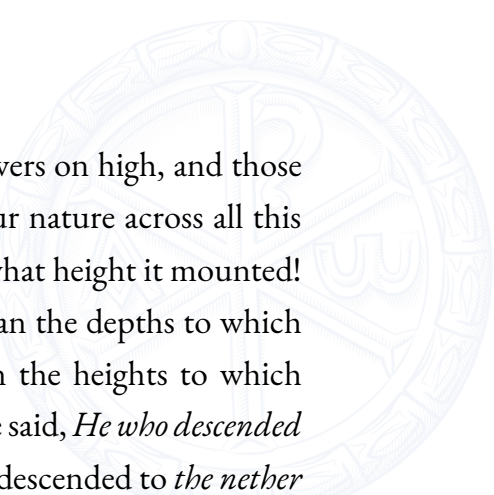
from God, the Master who loves mankind, and by putting himself in between, Christ reconciled both natures.

And how did he come between them? He took on himself the punishment that we deserved from the Father and endured the disgrace and insults that we inflicted on God. Do you desire to learn how he assumed both that punishment from on high and these insults here below? It is said, *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us* (Gal 3:13). See then how he received the punishment inflicted from above? Consider how he also endured the insults inflicted here below. *The insults of those who insult you*, he says, *have fallen on me* (Ps 68:10). See how he dissolved the enmity, how he did not cease to do, suffer, and painstakingly perform all things until he had brought the adversary and enemy back to God himself and made him a friend?

So this present day is the source of these blessings. For by assuming our nature just as if it were first-fruits, he offered it up to the Master. And just as is done in the case of plains bearing grain, where a few grains are taken, gathered into a small sheaf, and presented to God, who blesses the whole field for the sake of this small portion – this is precisely what Christ did. Through this one flesh and offering of first-fruits he caused the entire human race to be blessed. But why did he not offer the entirety of human nature? Because it is not the first-fruit when someone offers everything. Rather, by offering a small portion one procures a blessing for the whole by means of the part. ‘If he really were the first-fruits,’ one might say, ‘then he would have to have been the first man in order to offer himself; for the first-fruits are the first shoots, the first sprouts.’ But it is not the first-fruits, beloved, when we offer a first fruit that is blemished and of poor quality, but rather when we bring forth an acceptable offering. Therefore, because that first fruit was responsible for sin it was not offered, even though it was born first, while this one, because it was free of sin, was offered for this reason, even though it was produced later. For this is what it means to be the first-fruits.

3. And that you may learn that the first-fruits are not simply the first fruit to sprout, but the acceptable and noble fruit that has reached suitable ripeness, I will provide you with evidence from the Scriptures. *If you enter the land that the Lord your God gives you*, Moses says to the people, *and plant any tree that produces edible fruit, for three years you shall not purge its fruit; but in the fourth year its fruit will be holy to the Lord* (Lev 19:23-24). Of course, if the first-fruits were simply the first produce, the fruit itself should have been offered in the first year. But now it says, *For three years you will not purge its fruit*, instead you will leave it, because the tree is imperfect, its produce is frail and unripe. But in the fourth year, he says, *it will be holy to the Lord.* Consider then the wisdom of the lawgiver. He neither allowed anyone to eat of the fruit, lest he take it before God, nor did he permit it to be offered, lest it be presented to the Lord while still unripe. But he says, 'Leave it,' on the one hand, for it is the first, and, 'Do not offer it,' on the other, for it would be unworthy of the honor of the one receiving it. Do you see how the first-fruits are not from the first fruit to spring up, but from that which is first acceptable? And we are told these things on account of the flesh which Christ offered. He thus presented the first-fruits of our nature to the Father, and the Father so marveled at the gift, both because of the dignity of the offerer and the blamelessness of the offering, that he received the gift with his own hands, placed it at his side and said, *Sit at my right hand* (Ps 109:1).

To what sort of nature did God say, *Sit at my right hand*? To the very same one which had heard, *Dust you are and to dust you shall return* (Gen 3:19). Was it not enough for it to surpass the heavens? Was it not enough for it to stand amidst angels? Was this honor not indescribable as it was? But it surpassed the angels, exceeded the archangels, outstripped the Cherubim, ascended higher than the Seraphim, overtook the principalities, and did not cease until it assumed the Master's throne. Do you not see how great is the interval between heaven and earth? But let us begin from what is below. Do you not perceive the distance between Hades and the earth, and how increasingly greater are the intervals separating earth from heaven, and heaven from the upper heaven, and the upper heaven from the angels, and the angels



from the archangels, and the archangels from the powers on high, and those powers from the royal throne itself? Christ led up our nature across all this distance and height. Look where it lay below and to what height it mounted! It was impossible for man to go any further down than the depths to which he descended, and impossible to go any higher than the heights to which Christ had lifted him. And this Paul indicated when he said, *He who descended is the one who also ascended* (Eph 4:10). And again, he descended to *the nether regions of the earth* and *ascended far above all the heavens* (Eph 4:9-10). Come to know just who it was that ascended, or rather what kind of nature, or in what state it was before this. For I will dwell on the baseness of our kind with pleasure so that I might come to a superior knowledge of the honor bestowed by the Master's love for us.

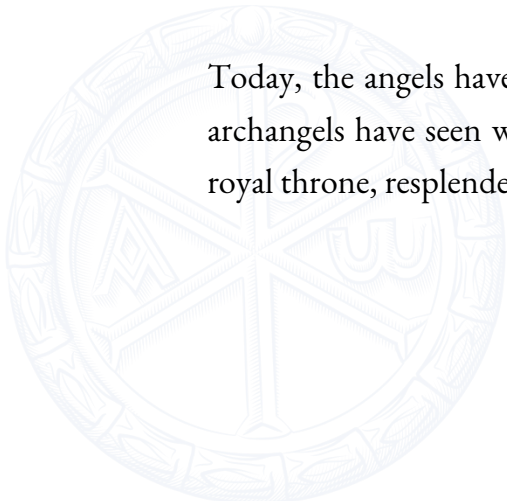
We were *dust and ash* (Gen 18:27), and even this was not yet a reproach to us, for the weakness was of our nature. But then we turned to a state more mindless than that of the irrational brutes: *For man was made comparable to the mindless cattle, and became like them* (Ps 48:21). Now, becoming like the irrational beasts in fact means becoming worse than them, since it is part of their nature to be naturally irrational and to persist in their irrational state. But when we who have been honored with a rational capacity fall into that irrational state, it is a reproach to our free will. So when you hear that they became like irrational brutes, do not think that this shows men out to be equal to them. Rather this was said to show how they became even worse than the brute beasts. Furthermore, we became worse and more insensible than the irrational beasts not just because as humans we fell down to their level, but in that we plunged toward even greater ignorance. And Isaiah indicates this when he says, *The ox has known his owner and the donkey the manger of his lord, but Israel has not known me* (Is 1:3). But let us not be ashamed to dwell on this former perverseness. *For where sin increased grace abounded all the more* (Rom 5:20). Have you seen how we became more senseless than cattle? *The ox has known his owner and the donkey the manger of his lord*. Do you care to see, then, how we have become more irrational than the birds too? *The turtle-dove and swallow, the wild sparrows observe the times of their coming in;*

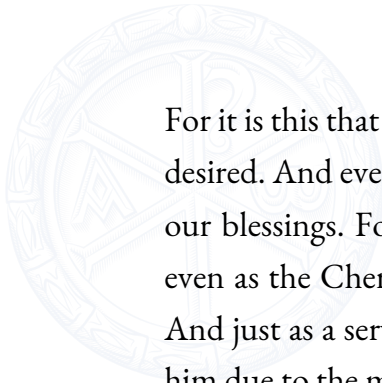
but my people do not know the judgments of the Lord (Jer 8:7). Behold how we became more mindless than donkeys and oxen, than the birds, than the turtle-dove and the swallow! Do you desire to learn of any other senselessness of ours? We were made the disciples of ants, to such a degree had we lost our natural wit: *Follow the ant*, it is said, *and emulate his ways* (Prov 6:6). We, who were created *according to the image of God* (Gen 1:26) were schooled by ants. However, it is by no means the Creator who was the cause of this, but it was we, who did not abide *in the image*. And why do I mention ants? We became more senseless than stones. Do you request that I produce a testimony of this as well? *Hearken, you precipices and foundations of the earth, for the Lord is coming in judgment before his people* (Mic 6:2). In judging humans do you summon the foundations of the earth also? ‘Yes,’ he says, ‘for humans are more senseless than the foundations of the earth.’

What further extreme of wickedness could you look for, when we have already proved to be more senseless than donkeys, more irrational than oxen, more ignorant than the swallow and turtle-dove, more witless than ants, duller than rocks, and equal to snakes. *For their fury*, it says, *resembles that of the snake; the venom of the viper is under their lips* (Ps 57:5; 13:3). And what need is there to mention the senselessness of irrational beasts when we appear to be called children of the devil himself? *For you*, says Christ, *are children of the devil* (Jn 8:44).

4. And yet we who are irrational, senseless, mindless, duller than stones, inferior to all else, without honor, utterly worthless – how might I say this? How shall I proceed? How might I utter this thing? This worthless nature, more senseless than anything, has today become exalted above all else.

Today, the angels have received what they had long yearned for; today, the archangels have seen what they long desired: our nature gleaming from the royal throne, resplendent in immortal glory and beauty.





For it is this that the angels long yearned for; it is this that the archangels long desired. And even though the honor exceeded their own, they still rejoiced in our blessings. For, indeed, when we were punished, they were grieved; and even as the Cherubim were guarding Paradise they nevertheless felt sorrow. And just as a servant who has taken a fellow slave into custody watches over him due to the master's command but is still distraught by the fact due to his compassion for his fellow slave, so likewise the Cherubim assumed the guardianship of Paradise but grieved at having to do so.

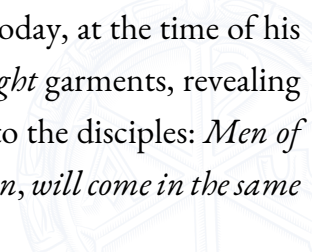
Now, that you may learn that they were grieving, I will make this clear from a human example. Whenever you see humans feeling such compassion for their fellow servants, no longer have any doubt regarding the Cherubim, for these angelic powers are far more compassionate than human beings.

Moreover, what typical just man grieves at the sight of men being justly punished for their countless transgressions? But this is what is wondrous, that they were grieved even after having witnessed the sins of humans and beheld how they transgressed against the Lord. It is for this reason that Moses too, after the Israelites worshiped idols, said to God, *If you forgive them their sin, forgive; but if not, blot me out also from the book which you have written* (Ex 32:32). What does this mean? While recognizing impiety you may also grieve for those being punished. It is as if he were saying, 'This is why I grieve, since they are being punished, and since they themselves incurred the blame for their just punishment.' Ezekiel too, when he beheld an angel cutting off the people, cried aloud and lamented, saying, *Woe is me, Lord, for you are blotting out the remnant of Israel!* (Ezek 9:8). And Jeremiah says, *Chasten us, Lord, but in judgment and not in anger, lest you diminish us* (Jer 10:24). If then Moses, Ezechiel, and Jeremiah were all grieved, how could those powers not have suffered any grief over our misfortunes? How would this make any sense?

Now, in order to learn that they share an interest in our affairs, think of what joy they showed when they saw the Master reconciled with us. If they had not been grieving before this, then they would not have had any pleasure

afterwards, either. It is clear that they rejoiced from the words that Christ says, that there *shall be joy in heaven* and on earth *over one sinner who repents* (Lk 15:7). If, then, the angels rejoice at seeing one sinner repent, how could they not receive the greatest pleasure today, upon seeing our whole nature offered up into heaven as first-fruits (1 Cor 15:20-23)? So then, hearken also to the jubilation of the inhabitants on high in another place over our reconciliation. For when our Lord Jesus Christ was born in the flesh and they saw that he was finally reconciled with men (for he would not have made such a descent if it were not a reconciliation) – when they saw this, then, they formed a chorus over the earth, proclaiming and saying, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good favor among men* (Lk 2:14). And that you may understand that this is why they glorified God (because the earth was receiving such blessings), they furnish the reason also, saying, *Peace on earth, good favor among men*: to those who were at enmity, to the enemies, the estranged, the senseless.

Do you see how they glorify God for the blessings of others, or rather for their own blessings? For they perceive our blessings to be their own. Do you wish to learn how they were already rejoicing and leaping for joy even as they anticipated to see him ascend? Listen to how Christ says that they were ascending and descending continually. This is the wondrous sight that they longed to see. And where do we get the proof that they were ascending and descending? Hear how he says, *You will see the heavens open from now on and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man* (Jn 1:51). For such is the habit of those who love passionately. They cannot even wait for the opportune moment but anticipate the appointed time with delight. Hence they descend, eager to behold that new and extraordinary spectacle: a human being appearing in heaven! Hence, angels appear everywhere: at the time of his birth, at the time of his resurrection, and today, at the time of his ascent. For it is said, *Behold there were two men in bright garments*, revealing their delight by their manner of dress. And they said to the disciples: *Men of Galilee, this Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven* (Acts 1:10-11).



5. Give me your close attention here. Why do they say this? For did the disciples not possess eyes? Had they not seen what had taken place? Did not the evangelist say, *As they were looking on, he was lifted up* (Acts 1:9)? Why did the angels stand in their midst to tell them that he ascended to heaven?

For these two reasons: first, that they were continually grieving at the prospect of Christ's departure. For, to understand that they were sorrowful, hear what Christ has to say to them: *None of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' But because I have said these things, sorrow has filled your heart.* If we, having friends and relatives, cannot bear to part with them, how could the disciples not have grieved to see the Savior, the teacher, the guardian, the lover of mankind, the gentle and good one, parting from them? How could they not have felt pain? This is why the angel stood there, in order to assuage the sorrow that came to them at Christ's ascent with the hope of his return.

For he says, *This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come back in the same way* (Acts 1:11). 'Are you grieved,' he says, 'because he was taken up? Yet grieve no more, for he will return again.' This is so that they would not do as Elisha had done, who upon seeing his master taken up tore apart his garment (4 Ki 2:12), since he had no one at his side to tell him that Elijah would return. To keep the disciples from doing so, the angels stood at their side to raise their spirits.

This is one reason for the presence of the angels. The second reason, in no way inferior to the first, is also why the angel added the words 'who was taken up'. What then is the reason? It was into heaven that he was taken up. Now the distance was great, and the power of our human sight was incapable of seeing a body taken up to the heavens. As in the case of a bird flying to the heights, which, the higher it goes the more it is hidden from our sight, so also was it the case with that body. For the further it ascended, the more hidden it became, since the weakness of our eyes were unable to follow its course due to the immense distance. Hence the angels stood by them, informing them of

his ascent to heaven so that they would not think that it was in the same manner that Elijah ascended that Jesus ascended into heaven. This is why he says, 'who was taken up from you to heaven.' For he did not add this without reason. Now Elijah was taken up to heaven because he was a servant, but Jesus was taken up to heaven because he was the Master. Hence the former went up in a chariot of fire, the latter on a cloud. For when the servant had to be summoned, he was sent a chariot. But when it was the Son, it was a royal throne, and not just any royal throne, but that of the Father himself. For indeed, Isaiah says of the Father: *Behold the Lord sits upon a swift cloud* (Is 19:1). And since the Father is enthroned upon a cloud, he sent the cloud to the Son also. Moreover, whereas Elijah left his sheepskin to Elisha when he ascended, when Jesus ascended he left gifts of grace to the disciples, not making one prophet only, but thousands of Elishas, or rather, making prophets far greater and more radiant than him.

So let us arise, beloved, and look forward to his return. For Paul also says, *The Lord himself will descend from heaven at the given signal, at the voice of an archangel; and we, the living who have been left, will be seized up on clouds to meet the Lord in the air*, but not all (1 Thess 4:16-17). In order to understand that not all of us will be seized up, but that some will remain, while others will be seized up, listen to what Christ says: *At that time there will be two women grinding in the mill, one will be taken and one left* (Mt 24:41), and, *There will be two men in bed, one will be taken and one will be left* (Lk 17:34-35). What is the meaning of this parable? What does this ineffable mystery signify? By the mill it refers to those who live in poverty and hardship, and by the bed and its repose it alludes to those who live in wealth and honor.

So then, wishing to show that even among the poor some are saved and others perish, Christ said, *of those in the mill, one is taken and one is left*, and of those *in bed, one is taken and one is left behind*, revealing that the sinners will be left here to await their punishment, whereas the righteous will be seized up into the clouds. For just as when a king marches triumphantly into a city, those of high rank and office who have great boldness before him go outside the city

to meet him, while those who are sentenced and condemned are kept inside to await the king's judgment, so in the same way, when the Lord comes, those who have boldness will go up to meet him in the midst of air, while the guilty, with many sins on their conscience, await the judge here below. Then we also will be seized up. However I have not said 'we' to put myself among the ranks of those who will be seized up. I am not so senseless and ignorant as to fail to recognize my own sins. Indeed, if I did not fear to disturb the pleasure of the present feast, I would have wept bitterly at the recollection of those words, since I am reminded of my own sins also.

But since I have no desire to confound the joy of the present feast, I will end my discourse here, leaving you with the memory of this day at its summit, so that neither the rich man will rejoice in his wealth nor the poor man despair at his poverty, but that each of them will know in his heart whether he has been acting one way or the other. For neither is the rich man blessed nor the poor man pitiful. But whoever is deemed worthy of that rapture into the clouds is blessed and thrice blessed, even if he is the poorest of all, just as he who falls short of it is pitiful and thrice wretched, even if he is the wealthiest of all. Thus, I say this so that those of us who remain in sins may lament over ourselves, while those who are living in virtuous deeds may be emboldened, or rather, not only that the virtuous may be emboldened, but that they may make their place secure; and not only that the sinners may lament, but that they may be changed.

For it is even possible for the one who has been living in vice, by turning from wickedness to virtue, to return and even become equal to those who have led a righteous life from the beginning. Let us too strive for this end, and let those who are conscious of their virtue remain in reverence, constantly increasing this noble possession and adding to the boldness they already possess. But as for us who do not have such boldness and are aware of our many sins, let us change, so that by attaining their boldness we may all together receive in unison the King of angels with all the glory due unto him and enjoy the blessing of that blissful merriment. May we all attain this by the grace and love

of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom to the Father be glory, honor, and power, together with the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

