

**Seventh Sunday of Easter**  
**Cycle A RCL**  
**Revised**

**Acts 1:6-14**

We find Jesus's ascent into heaven only in Luke and Acts as well as in verse 19 of the "longer ending" of Mark's Gospel (Mark 16:9-20). Acts is the second volume of a two-volume work, with the Gospel According to Luke as the first volume. Both books come from an anonymous author, and the earliest ascription of the books to Luke, the companion of Paul, derives from the end of the second century CE. The question from Jesus' students, whether he will restore the kingship to Israel, reflects their belief that the coming of the Messiah, the Son of David, would at last fulfill the promises made by God to David in 2 Samuel 7.

**Psalm 68:1-10, 33-36**

This psalm has perhaps provoked more discussion among scholars than any other single psalm. The poem contains features of the *hymns*, but we find in it only hymnic fragments rather than a full-blown psalm of that category. The psalm begins with a version of the Song of the Ark, found also in Numbers 10:35 with its dominant figure as that of the Lord as leader of the holy war. There exists, however, no scholarly agreement about meaning of the psalm or about its setting in the worship of ancient Israel. The reference to Yahweh "riding in the heavens" recalls Hittite images of gods, riding in a standing position on the backs of various animals.

**1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11**

Although 1 Peter does not derive from a time of empire-wide persecution of Christians, its author accurately points to the danger all Christians faced, whether from the Emperor or from local magistrates, for their confession of Christ. These dangers the author calls simply the "fiery ordeal, 4:12), but one might best render *purosei pros peirasmon*, something like "fiery testing." For some reason, the RCL has chosen to omit the rest of chapter four (verses 15-19) where the author enjoins the readers to endure suffering for Christ but avoid being judged as common criminals. The final exhortations (verses 5:6-11) promise eternal glory to those who endure suffering but warn that the devil is always looking for someone who is not "steadfast" to "devour" (5:8), *i. e.* someone who under pressure will forsake Christ.

**John 17:1-11**

Often called Jesus' "high-priestly prayer," the contents of this chapter conclude the farewell discourses and are the final blessing of the disciples before the arrest of Jesus. The "glorification" of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel is his being lifted up on the cross, and in that awful and terrible event the glory of the Father manifests itself in the Son. This glory is the glory the *logos* had before becoming a human being (John 1:14). Similarly, in the arduous ministry to which Jesus now sends his students, that same glory will manifest itself through them to the whole world.