The Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven is one of the most solemn, glorious, and profound events in the entire history of salvation. Yet it is also one of the Gospel episodes that raises the most questions among many believers.

Where exactly did it happen?
Was it in Jerusalem or in Galilee?
Why do some passages insist that the disciples should not leave Jerusalem, while others show Christ summoning them to Galilee?
One is in the north and the other in the south.
Is there a contradiction?
Or are we facing a mystery far richer than it first appears?

The answer, far from weakening the faith, reveals the extraordinary coherence of the Gospels and the theological depth of God's plan.

Because the Ascension is not simply "Jesus going up to Heaven." It is the crowning of Redemption, Christ's definitive triumph over death, the opening of Heaven to humanity, and the beginning of the universal mission of the Church.

The Ascension: Christ's Last Visible Act on Earth

Before entering into the geographical question, it is necessary to understand what the Ascension truly means.

After rising gloriously from the dead, Jesus Christ remained for forty days appearing to His disciples:

> *"To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."*
> *— Acts 1:3*

During those forty days:

- He confirmed the reality of the Resurrection,
- instructed the Apostles,
- strengthened their faith,
- definitively established the evangelizing mission,
- and prepared the newborn Church to receive the Holy Spirit.

The Ascension was the moment when Christ, with His glorified humanity, solemnly entered heavenly glory.

He did not abandon humanity.
He took it with Him to the Father.

As the Catechism teaches:

> *"The Ascension of Christ marks the definitive entrance of Jesus' humanity into God's heavenly domain."*

This completely changes human history.
For the first time, a man — true man and true God — enters Heaven glorified.

Where Did the Ascension Take Place?

Christian tradition, Scripture, and the Church have historically pointed to a specific location:

The Mount of Olives, near Bethany, east of Jerusalem

The Gospel of Saint Luke states:

> *"And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, whilst he blessed*

> *them, he departed from them, and was carried up into heaven."*
> *— Luke 24:50–51*

And in the Acts of the Apostles we read:

> *"Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey."*
> *— Acts 1:12*

Therefore, the traditional site of the Ascension is:

- the Mount of Olives,
- specifically near Bethany,
- very close to Jerusalem.

Why Is This Place So Important?

It is not accidental.

The Mount of Olives is deeply connected to Christ's Passion and glory.

There:

- Jesus wept over Jerusalem,
- taught about the end times,
- spent nights in prayer,
- suffered the agony in Gethsemane,
- was betrayed,
- and finally ascended gloriously to the Father.

The very mountain that witnessed His humiliation later beheld His exaltation.

Here we find one of the great spiritual laws of Christianity:

> *God transforms the place of suffering into a place of glory.*

Then Why Did Jesus Tell the Disciples to Go to Galilee?

Here arises the great difficulty.

The Gospel of Saint Matthew relates:

> *“But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.”*
> *— Matthew 26:32*

And later:

> *“Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.”*
> *— Matthew 28:16*

Furthermore, the angel says to the women:

> *“Go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him.”*
> *— Matthew 28:7*

So how does this fit with the Ascension in Jerusalem?

The answer lies in understanding that:

- Christ's appearances after the Resurrection occurred in different places,
- and the Gospels do not attempt to narrate every episode in exhaustive chronological order.

Galilee and Jerusalem: Two Spiritual Poles of Christianity

There is enormous theological depth here.

Galilee: The Place of the Beginning

Galilee was:

- where Jesus called the Apostles,
- where He began His preaching,
- where He performed many of His miracles,
- where most of the disciples lived.

Galilee represents:

- the beginning of the mission,
- evangelization among the simple,
- the call,
- the first love.

That is why Christ wanted to meet His disciples there again.

It is as though He were saying:

> *"Let us return to the place where everything began."*

Many saints have seen here a spiritual teaching:
when the soul grows cold, it must return to its “Galilee,” that is, to the place where it truly encountered Christ.

Jerusalem: The Place of Fulfillment

Jerusalem, on the other hand, represents:

- the consummation of the sacrifice,
- the Passion,
- the Death and Resurrection,
- the visible birth of the Church at Pentecost.

Christ had to complete the work of Redemption there.

That is why He says to the Apostles:

> *“And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father.”*
> *— Acts 1:4*

Why?

Because the Holy Spirit would descend in Jerusalem.

The Church had to be born there.

The New Covenant had to manifest itself precisely in the religious heart of Israel.

Was There a Contradiction Between Galilee and Jerusalem?

Absolutely not.

What happened was the following:

1. Christ rose in Jerusalem.
2. He appeared several times in Jerusalem and its surroundings.
3. The disciples also went to Galilee, where Christ appeared to them.
4. Later they returned to Jerusalem.
5. There they remained waiting for Pentecost.
6. Finally, the Ascension took place on the Mount of Olives.

There is no incompatibility.

The Gospels emphasize different episodes according to the theological purpose of each sacred author.

Why Does Saint Matthew Emphasize Galilee?

Saint Matthew has a profoundly missionary intention.

Galilee was known as:

> *“Galilee of the Gentiles.”*
> *— Matthew 4:15*

It was a culturally mixed region and less rigid than Jerusalem.

By emphasizing Galilee, Matthew is suggesting that the Gospel will be proclaimed to all nations.

And precisely there Christ pronounces the great missionary mandate:

> *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations.”*
> *— Matthew 28:19*

Galilee symbolizes the universality of the Church.

Why Does Saint Luke Focus Everything on Jerusalem?

Because Saint Luke wants to show the continuity between:

- the Old Testament,
- the Temple,
- Israel,
- and the newborn Church.

In Luke:

- everything converges in Jerusalem,
- and from Jerusalem the Gospel expands to the world.

This will become precisely the structure of the Acts of the Apostles:

- Jerusalem,
- Judea,
- Samaria,
- and to the ends of the earth.

The Ascension Was Not a “Farewell”

Many imagine the Ascension as though Jesus were simply “going away.”

But theologically, the exact opposite happens.

Christ:

- does not abandon the Church,
- but inaugurates a new form of presence.

Before, He was visibly limited by space and time.
Now He is present:

- in the Eucharist,
- in the sacraments,
- in the Church,
- in grace,
- and spiritually everywhere.

That is why He says:

> *“And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”*
> *— Matthew 28:20*

The Ascension does not mean absence.
It means kingship.

The Cosmic Meaning of the Ascension

Here we enter one of the most forgotten aspects of modern theology.

Christ ascends:

- as King,
- as High Priest,
- as the New Adam,
- as the conqueror of Satan,
- and as the Head of redeemed humanity.

The Fathers of the Church taught that the Ascension is the enthronement of the King of the Universe.

Psalm 47 seems to prophesy it:

> *"God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet."*
> *— Psalm 47:5*

Christ's humanity enters Heaven glorified.

And that means our human nature already has a place beside the Father.

What immense hope!

The Cloud: A Detail Full of Theology

Acts says:

> *"And a cloud received him out of their sight."*
> *— Acts 1:9*

This is not simply a meteorological cloud.

In the Bible, the cloud symbolizes:

- the divine presence,
- the glory of God,
- the Shekinah.

The cloud:

- guided Israel in the desert,
- covered Sinai,
- filled the Temple,
- appeared at the Transfiguration.

Now it receives the glorified Son.

This is profoundly biblical language.

Where Is That Place of the Ascension Today?

Christian tradition has venerated for centuries the sanctuary of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives.

There stands a small chapel built over the traditional site.

Chapel of the Ascension

According to an ancient tradition, what was believed to be a footprint of Christ in the rock was even venerated there.

Although this cannot be proven with absolute archaeological certainty, the spiritual value of the place is immense and it has been honored since the earliest centuries.

Spiritual Applications for the Modern Christian

The Ascension is not a distant event from the past.

It speaks directly to modern man.

We live in an age:

- obsessed with material things,
- trapped in the immediate,
- dominated by anxiety,
- and often without an eternal horizon.

The Ascension reminds us that:

- our true homeland is in Heaven,
- earthly life is not the end,
- suffering can be transformed into glory,
- and Christ reigns even when the world seems chaotic.

Saint Paul writes:

> *"Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."*
> *— Colossians 3:1*

The Christian lives on earth…
but with his heart directed toward Heaven.

The Great Lesson of Jerusalem and Galilee

Finally, the apparent “problem” between Jerusalem and Galilee ends up revealing a precious lesson.

The Christian needs both dimensions:

He Needs Galilee

The place of the first encounter with Christ.
Conversion.
The call.
The simplicity of the Gospel.

But He Also Needs Jerusalem

The Cross.
Perseverance.
Waiting for the Holy Spirit.
Spiritual maturity.
Mission.

Many want a faith of Galilee without passing through Jerusalem.

They want miracles… but not the Cross.
Emotion… but not fidelity.
Inspiration… but not sacrifice.

Yet Christ leads His disciples from Galilee to Jerusalem… and from Jerusalem to Heaven.

That is also our path.

Conclusion: The Ascension Opens the Way to Heaven

The Ascension truly took place near Jerusalem, on the Mount of Olives, after Christ had also appeared in Galilee during the forty days following the Resurrection.

There is no contradiction between the Gospels.
There is complementarity.

Galilee represents the beginning of the mission.
Jerusalem represents its fulfillment.
And the Ascension represents Christ's definitive glorification and the opening of Heaven to humanity.

Therefore, when we contemplate the Ascension, we are not simply looking at a historical event.

We are contemplating our destiny.

Christ ascends to prepare a place for us.

As He Himself promised:

> *"I go to prepare a place for you."*
> *— John 14:2*

And that promise remains today the greatest hope of the Christian.