

God Is For Us: The Ascension and the Outpouring

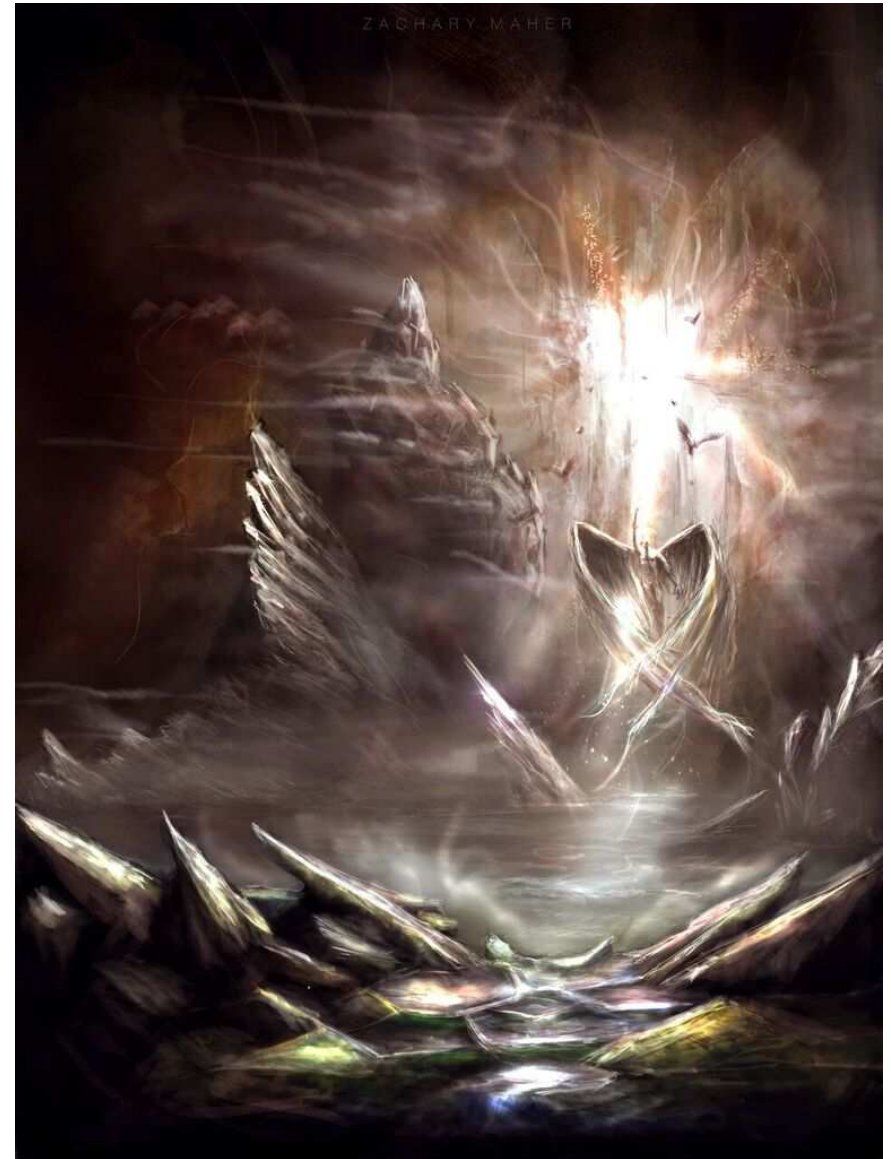


Exhibit Guide

God Is For Us: The Ascension and the Outpouring

May 7-8 | May 14-15

*Cover art by Zach Maher, *Forerunner*

INTRODUCTION

Our art always tells a story. Since 2005 I have been fascinated with and edified by the doctrine and implications of the ascension of Christ. The ascension is a neglected aspect of the life of Christ, yet it is a pivotal moment in redemptive history. For the past decade I have written songs, articles, blogs, and prayers all informed by the profound reality of a risen and ascended Lord. It is my desire that the church rediscovers and appropriates this important doctrine for it leads us to the present ministry of Christ and the Holy Spirit and reveals the full scope of the Gospel story.

This Spring I issued a Call to Artists, inviting the creative souls of Covenant Presbyterian Church to engage with the theme: *God Is For Us: The Ascension and the Outpouring*. My hope was that our artists would help us rediscover and celebrate the Ascension and Pentecost (two major festivals within the Christian Year) and awaken our biblical imaginations to the wonder, the power, and the advocacy of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

I have been so encouraged by the response of our participants! Now I am excited for you, the congregation, to be able to experience and absorb the creative expression of more than a dozen artists. The exhibit spans a variety of artistic media including photography, poetry, prose, music, woodworking, watercolor, mixed media, tile mosaic, oil, ink, sculpture, and digital art.

This exhibit guide will walk you through each work and allow you to engage with each piece. The guide includes a brief statement from each artist and a window into their creative process. I know you will be edified and inspired! To God be the glory.

- Paxson Jeancake, Director of Worship
Ascension of the Lord | May 5, 2016

#1

Artist: Jeanette Keen

Title: Going Home

Medium: Watercolor

Fifty plus years ago a very dear friend of mine, Harry Amidon, died suddenly. During the funeral, I was sitting beside his brother, Tommy. When the minister asked us to bow our heads Tommy's eyes were fixed on the casket.

After the service Tommy told me that as the minister led us in prayer he saw Harry rise and look down on all of us, smiling. Above him were two great arms with white fabric draped over them and something red and orange on each arm waiting for him. This image has been inside of me for all these years. This painting is my attempt to show what happened. It's been very comforting to me, and I hope it portrays this feeling to others.



#20

Artist: Mark Diener

Medium: Woodworking

This idea of God continuing to work in us and through us is also found in Jesus' words in John 16:12, "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now." God's Spirit brings truth, it gives us the ability to process and apply those incredible truths to our lives, and it also helps us to share those truths as we minister in the lives of others. God is patient and incredibly gracious with us as He brings those truths to bear in our lives. What a beautiful connection there is between the God of Creation, the masterful designer of all these materials, the One who helps me hone my skills as I choose, design, and fabricate material objects, but more importantly, helps me to reflect the love I receive as he continues to mold me to be more like his Son.



#19

Artist: Mark Diener

Medium: Woodworking

God is for us! God's Creation is simply a wonder. His Creation reminds me of his promise of everlasting love for us. Romans 8:31-34 gives the comfort of knowing that God continues to be at work within us, graciously giving us all we need for this life, and also for eternal life through Christ's intercession for us. I look at the amazing palette of wonderful textures, colors, and patterns in these raw materials that God has given and I see the beauty of stripes. God the Father "did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all..." His stripes are even more beautiful than any of these materials, because they bring us abundant, eternal life!



#2

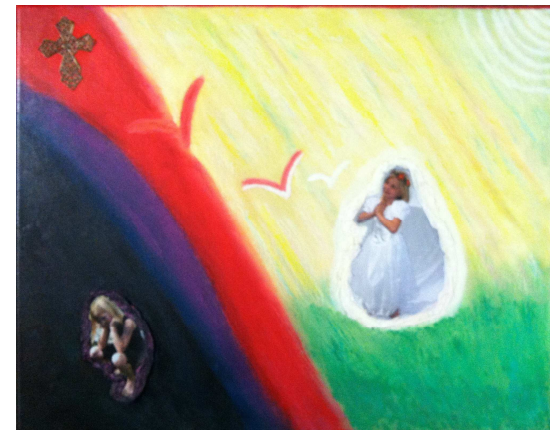
Artist: Jamie Unser

Title: From Darkness to Light

Medium: Mixed Media

I have always been intrigued by the contrast of light and dark, good versus evil, hope versus despair, so illustrating the current ministry of the Holy Spirit really spoke to me. I started with a vision of showing our sin and despair, the washing of Christ's blood, and the light that is given when the Holy Spirit comes to reside in our hearts, and how God now views us for eternity. The light of God's grace is so much greater than the darkness of sin we were born into. My hope is in God, in Christ's sacrifice, and in the Holy Spirit living within me, strengthening me day by day.

Emalee is a wise little girl and understood what I wanted to illustrate. Her photos were the start of the piece. I began by layering oil pastels, then adding some acrylics for final details. I blend the pastels by hand while applying heat using a hair dryer. It takes multiple sittings to get all the layers in place. The birds came to mind from the passage where the Holy Spirit descended "like a dove" at Jesus' baptism. Also, the white arcs in the top corner were my thoughts of sound waves, of the Holy Spirit "speaking" to believers currently.



#3

Artist: Marion Redding

Title: Ascension - Pentecost / Fun In Heaven

Medium: Tile Mosaic

Visions never appeared to me
Before the Night we Celebrated Dad's Resurrection,
A longest day of Joy and Music,
Tears and laughter, hugs and words,
Extending into the night
On the inside of my eyelids
A rewinding Vision of every face,
Every expression, one by one,
Touching my heart, as each passed by.
So much love, comforting moments,
All repeated in the dark young hours.
At one point, my eyes raised up
Reasoning that there was more in view
Just above, in blue.
It was as if Someone had dropped a curtain,
Creating a Higher horizon,
One that was not static, but vital, moving like a lake
Percussed with raindrops.
The movements were definite ovals,
Pushing through the curtain's plane, but yet unrevealed.
At last I perceived a nose, a chin,
Could the ovals be faces? Yes!



#18

Artist: Amanda Schillinger

Title: This Present Spirit

Medium: Oil

Inspiration: While I was reading, many things stuck in my mind about the Ascension of Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The cross in the background with the white shawl was simply inspired by Christ's ascension to the Father in heaven. The church in the foreground with the hands symbolizes the Holy Spirit being around, within, and present in the body of Christ, the church. A scripture passage that stuck in the back of my mind was John 16:5-7, "But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you." Another passage that was on my mind was Romans 8:9-11, "You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you."



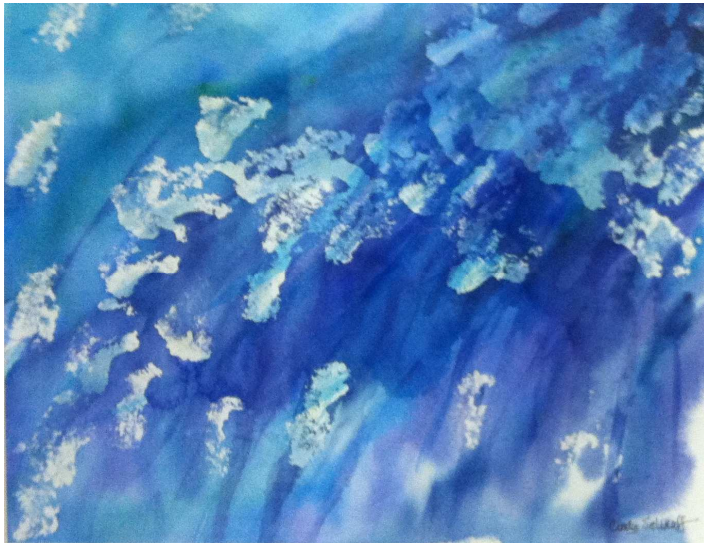
#17

Artist: Cindy Selikoff

Title: Rivers of Living Water

Medium: Watercolor

The subject is a flowing river, painted in an abstract expressionist style. The verse which inspired me is John 7:28, "Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them" (NIV). I wanted to convey the scripture verse as a personal experience because I find the verse as a challenge to look for evidence of God's Holy Spirit flowing not only from my innermost being, but also flowing out to others. I chose to do an abstract painting because it communicates both feeling and an impression of a river.



The one at about two o'clock
Penetrated the veil, and I saw my Daddy's face,
Young and vital, the very way
He looked the day of our First communion.
His voice unheard as all was silent,
Silent as the grave, but his eyes and mouth and cheeks were with
Urgency and intensity communicating
His passionate message, from the other side of the Jordan.
Not a message of threat or fear,
His smile so wide, his head nodding with joy and laughter,
His eyes looking up, as if "Just wait till you get to this party!
You can't imagine how much fun we're having!"
He looked up and down, again and again, as if
Saying with penetrating gaze,
"You, Merry Nun, are going to have this fun on earth too!"
Then Mom appears about ten o'clock!
Then, the only hands to appear in this scene,
Many evenings we sat when he was late for dinner -
That beautiful soufflé flat—and Mom not happy....
Dad on kairotic time when his people needed him.
Dad would be heard first, whistling
"Bell Bottom Trousers and his heels clicking in time the floor.
We kids would fidget
Just behind the door jamb and sticks his face
Right around, then wraps his arm around his back,
Sticks his fingers in his mouth and nose,
Pulling himself back behind the door.
By this time the kids are shrieking with laughter.
After a few more times, Mom's hand papers
To cover her mouth and her mirth -
He always caught her with a mouth full of Postum
Which she baptized us all with and mayhem ensued.
A perfect image of Heaven's joy.
The visit then expanded - all the other ovals became
Recognizable - my dear brother John,
Our grandparents, aunts and uncles, ancestors . . .
The great cloud of witnesses. . .
They stayed till morning light, like a silent song
Of laughter and thigh slapping jokes.

#4

Artist: Linda Almarales

Title: Life

Medium: Tile Mosaic

The flowers and butterfly represent the constant transformation which is called Life.



#5

Artist: Betty Jackson

Title: Cross and Heart

Medium: Tile Mosaic

Because God so loved us, He sacrificed Christ on the Cross. The symbolism of the heart and the cross unite in this mosaic.



#16

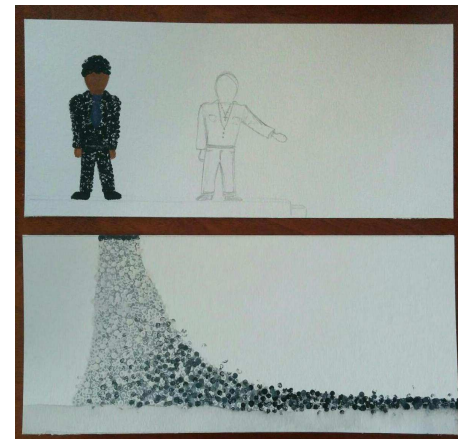
Artist: Emily Hoenigmann

Title: Marriage Mediator

Medium: Watercolor and Pointillism

I was inspired by Romans 8:34 where it talks about the present ministry of Christ, "who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us." I like to think about this aspect of Christ's Ascension and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It's comforting to me to know that Christ is, at this moment, by God's side, serving as the mediator between us. This idea came to mind through a culmination of things. I was looking for an angle, so I had this project in the back of my mind when I noticed a connection between this project and what Mr. Axsom had been teaching us from R.C. Sproul's book *Essential Truths of the Christian Faith in Doctrines* at school. Sproul says, "An effective mediator is one who is able to make peace between parties who are in conflict or estranged from each other. This is the role Jesus performed as our perfect Mediator."

I had found my angle, so I then needed to decide how I wanted to represent this concept visually. Over three frames, I chose to depict a wedding, in which God is the groom, the bride represents us, and the preacher/priest is Jesus. The simplicity of three frames helps me to remember Christ's role in my salvation in the past, present, and future, and what his atoning mediation means for my relationship with God the Father.



#15

Artist: Betty Jackson

Title: Ascension Fanfare Anthem

Music

After reading Psalm 24, Psalm 100, and Psalm 150 and Revelation, I envision a welcome-home party of immense dimension, when Jesus is welcomed back to the heavenly realms. Gabriel announces His return, the angels ask who can enter the gates, the elders make it clear that the Son of God has fulfilled His earthly mission, and the Hallelujahs begin in earnest. After the entry, all bow down to worship, and Hallelujahs ring through heaven with a mighty chorus of angels, with the sounds of the harp, the lute, the cymbals, all represented by the organ, trumpets, piano, and voices. The anthem is designed for the congregation to participate as well in the triumphal entry to heaven.

The image shows a page of a musical score titled "Ascension Festival Fanfare Anthem" by Betty Winsler Jackson. The score is based on Psalms 24, 100, and 150. It includes parts for Tenor Solo, Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, Piano, Trumpets in Bb, and Organ. The tempo is marked "Allegro" with a metronome marking of 112. The lyrics "Ho - sa -" are visible under the vocal parts. The score is copyrighted in 2016.

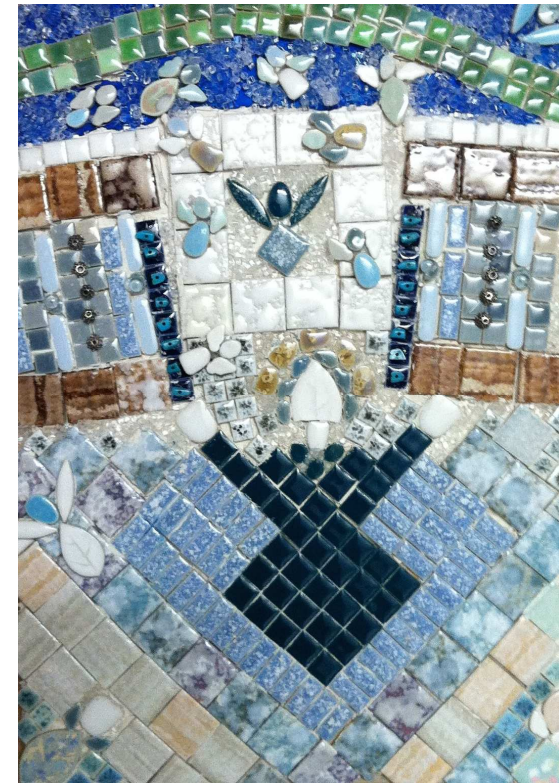
#6

Artist: Betty Jackson

Title: Ascension of Christ into Heaven

Medium: Tile Mosaic

For this mosaic, I chose the very moment when Jesus returned to heaven, with the gates wide open and the angels welcoming Him home to be seated at the right hand of the Father.



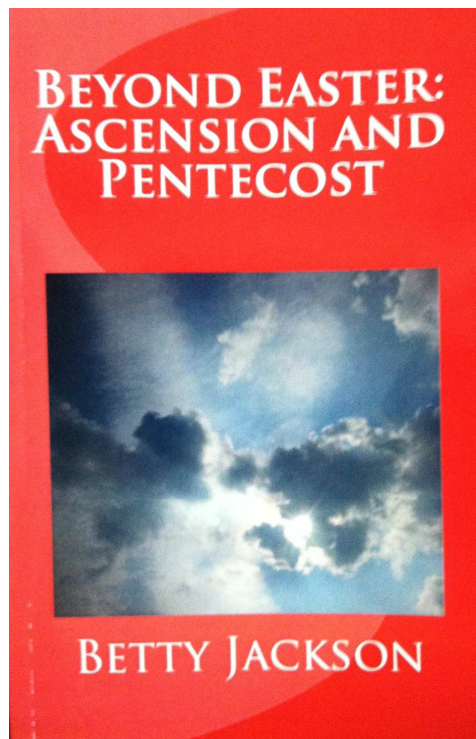
#13

Artist: Betty Jackson

Title: Beyond Easter: Ascension and Pentecost
Book

Beyond Easter is a unit work on the theme, including poetry, original psalms, lyrics, an essay, and an excerpt from my book, "It's a God Thing!" which discusses the work of the Holy Spirit.

It is my hope that people will read this and consider how wonderful our sovereign Lord's plan for salvation is, and result in their prayerful thanksgiving to God for that gift. All proceeds from the \$5.00 charge will go to Global Missions at Covenant, a very visible work of the Holy Spirit's Presence.



#8

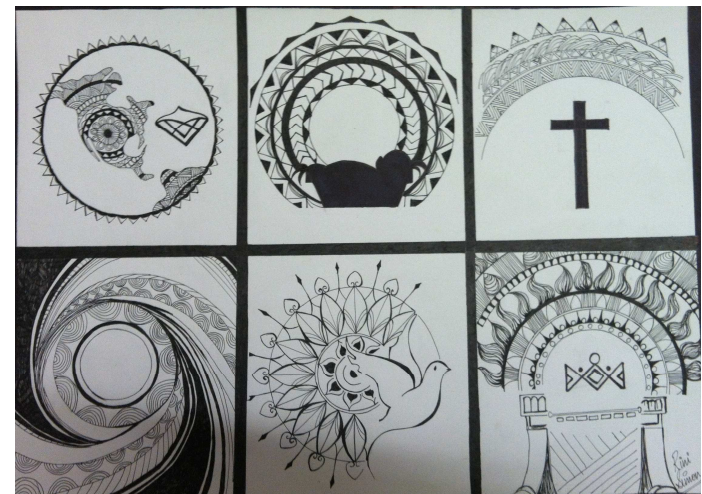
Artist: Rini Simon

Title: Look Inside
Medium: Ink

Mandala - Sanskrit word for circle. Referred to as nature's art.

The main focus is the central point within the symbol from which radiates a symmetrical design, which suggests there is a center within each one of us to which everything is related, by which everything is ordered and which is itself a source of energy and power... which is nothing but our soul and Christ within us.

The art piece tells the story of Christ's life and the essence of it. We need to find ways to connect to our inner depths to heal our wounds, and that can be done only through Christ.



#9

Artist: John Prentice

Title: Ascension

Medium: Photo-Graphics

Some insights about the creative process

I am no artist; I am a technician. Initially I was hoping to photograph an allegory from nature but that might take a lifetime to find. So I realized that I would have to synthesize the image. I researched what artists had done throughout church history. One thing I noted was the use of symbolism. When I discovered Salvador Dali's "Ascension," my first reaction was that I wanted this same intimate perspective, that of a disciple looking up. My second reaction was that Dali wasn't portraying Jesus. The rest was figuring out what images I needed and grinding out the the final product. If a photo is mediocre, print it large and put it in a nice frame and no one will notice your lack of talent.



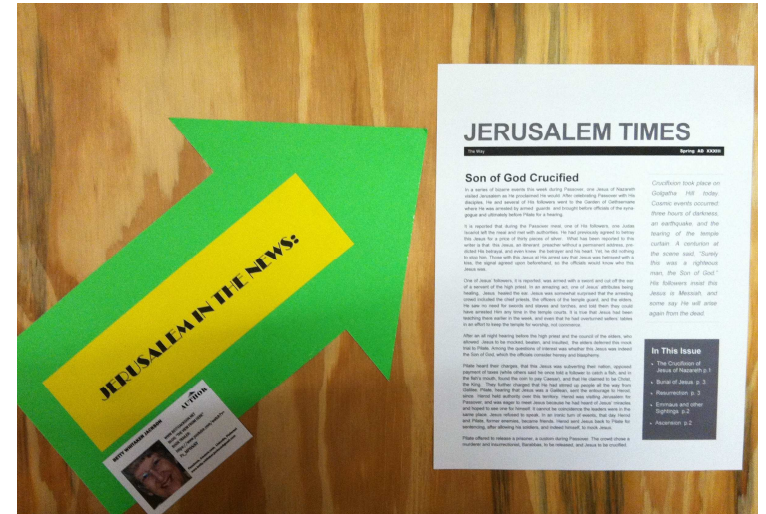
#12

Artist: Betty Jackson

Title: The Jerusalem Times

Literary Arts

For this piece, I was thinking (like the men who were walking to Emmaus) how people would hear about all the news during Holy Week and beyond. In our day, they would have internet, newspapers, Twitter, and Facebook. But in first century Jerusalem, they might have someone who would relay the news. Using Publisher and pictures from the Internet, this is a journalistic view of the Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension, and Pentecost.



#11

Artist: Ruthe Hunsinger

Medium: Sculpture

The inspiration for the sculpture is: Luke 3:22,
“The Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove.”

The stone is steatite (soapstone) and I use a rasp, hammer and chisel to carve. The real beauty of the stone emerges as I smooth and sand the sculpture, revealing the beautiful veining and color.

Colossians 3:4 is carved on the back of the stone,
“When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you will appear with him in glory.”



The inspiration for this work and its significance to me personally

The setting is Acts 1:9. This picture is supposed to depict Christ’s transition from his earthly ministry back to His place of honor with the Father. My spiritual gift(s) is something like “encouragement” or “helper.” When this project was announced, I thought about Tim Keller’s challenge to the urban churches to excel in the arts for the sake of the Gospel. So my first inspiration was to help by participation in hope that this event would succeed and add a ministry to Covenant such as I had seen in Atlanta with several churches taking the Gospel to their local artist community. The second inspiration was that I didn’t have to find an image, but it was acceptable to synthesize one. The third inspiration was to take the Salvador Dali “Ascension” and fix it. I believe these little “inspirations” were God whispers.

The significance to me was thinking about Jesus’ transition. What was He leaving behind? What was He taking with Him? What was He going back to or reclaiming? What was He feeling? I’m also hoping to encourage others to participate and exercise their little or great artistic talents the next time. On a deeper, more personal level, I’m wrestling with the conflict of wanting to be praised for my work versus glorifying Christ.

About the Picture

Jesus was killed and then came back to life and spent some time with his friends before going off to heaven. This picture might be what some of his friends saw as Jesus was leaving. Please leave me a note telling me what things you see in this picture and tell me why you think I put them in. For example, look at Jesus’ feet and tell me what you see. What else can you find?

We put different things into a picture so that the whole picture will tell a big story. We call some of these things symbols. Did you ever see a picture of someone with a halo? A halo is a symbol that the person in the picture had a special relationship with God (or is being very good if it is a cartoon). There are some symbols in this picture. If you find them, leave me a note.

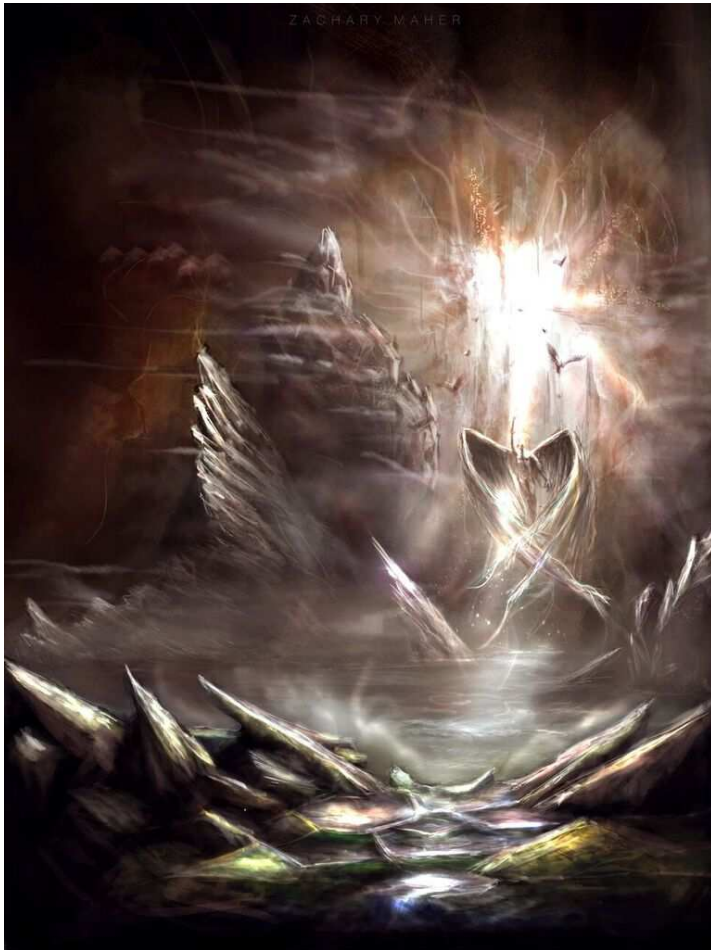
#10

Artist: Zach Maher

Title: Forerunner

Medium: Digital Art

Psalm 24 starts with the paramount declaration that this is our Father's world - that He has made all things in accordance to His redemptive plan.



The second part of this psalm asks the question, "Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place?" followed by the answer, "He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. He will receive blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation." The only one who fulfills these roles is Jesus, the Son of God, the truly righteous One.

Then, the crescendo scene takes place in heaven as if the angels or host of heaven await the coming "*King of Glory*." And this is a picture of that scene somewhere in the depths of heaven as the Forerunner, Jesus, enters into heaven on our behalf rendering that barrier ("*be lifted up, O ancient doors*") between God and us as obsolete.

Inspiration: The mood of the this dramatic scene was important so I contrasted the lights and darks with a vignette, much like old oil paintings from the Renaissance or Gothic painters. The radiance of Christ, being brighter than anything, changes the geography with light.