

His Glorious Ascension

Loving Our Magnificent, Invincible Savior

This one gets overlooked. It seems almost like an afterthought, appended to the earth-shaking events of death and resurrection. A lovely way for the Lord to make an exit. Don't underestimate how important it is that Jesus ascended! Suppose He had stayed down here? Wouldn't you? Why didn't He? There is something crucial in this to know; even more, it is vital that we learn to live by it. His glorious ascension was for our sake as well as His.

Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. Luke 24:50-51 ESV

What Might Have Been

The Ascension of Jesus Christ carries tremendous consequences for us and also provides an important focus for our faith-vision of our Risen Lord. Because it is recorded in the Bible, it is readily accepted by believers, but suppose (for a minute) that God's plan for our salvation didn't include raising Jesus *all the way* to heaven. Suppose the Father only raised Jesus "above ground" so to speak, by restoring Him to life on earth. That's a genuine resurrection too. What difference would that have made?



His Deity

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead would have lost much, if not all, of its life-transforming power for us without the Ascension following it up. Lazarus was raised from the dead, too. So was the widow of Nain's son. So were several people in the Old Testament. Come to think of it, so were multitudes in Jerusalem following the earthquake that took place during the crucifixion of Jesus. What would the resurrection of Jesus to life "above ground" have proved, had He not been raised visibly all the way to heaven?

There were elements about Jesus' resurrection appearances and His Resurrection Body that differed in the details from others who have been restored to life. He could pass through walls and show up unexpectedly even when great distances had to be covered. Nevertheless, the conclusive proof, even in Peter's Pentecost sermon, that Jesus' resurrection carried unprecedented significance was in His visible and astounding ascension. All Israel was to "know for certain" that Jesus is Lord and Christ because God raised Him from death "into the heavens" where He sits at the right hand of God.

This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise



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of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." Acts 2:32-36 ESV

Just as we know from the scriptures that the "fame" of Jesus spread quickly around Galilee as His ministry increased, so too we can safely assume that the "rumor mill" in ancient Jerusalem thrived on gossip about the Messiah, any messiah. Those who listened to Peter, no doubt, had previously heard the many rumors about this presumed messiah's death, resurrection and ascension. Since the Ascension took place on the Mount of Olives in plain view of the Temple Mount, it is possible, even likely, that more people than His inner circle saw Jesus ascend "into the heavens." Now, Peter is telling them that the rumors are true! He and the others on whom the Holy Spirit had just been so generously (and loudly) poured out are eye witnesses of it all

His Work

His glorious ascension proves more than Jesus' deity as "Lord and Christ." It inevitably points to the uniqueness of His death as a sacrifice for our sins. Because the Ascension showed the disciples that Jesus is both "Lord and Christ," they further studied the scriptures to learn more about His divine assignment as Messiah (Christ). Remember that even up to His Ascension the disciples were still stuck on thinking that Jesus had come as Messiah to establish an *earthly* kingdom.

Those persistent presuppositions were forever shattered when He left them behind without accomplishing what they expected their Messiah to do. Why then had He come? Casting about to understand their error, the sin-bearing passages in Isaiah about God's suffering Servant would have taken on new meaning for them as they do for us.

Our Need

Because Jesus ascended we are all on a level playing field. Had He remained on earth, He could have launched the early church under His direct, visible leadership. That would have been a tremendous benefit, right? Not necessarily. Assuming that He would have died later (or been murdered by His enemies all over again), then all Christians who came later would feel at a great disadvantage from the first century believers who would have all known Jesus "in the flesh" and who would have been taught directly by Him. This would have crippled all succeeding generations of the church from pressing in to recover or go beyond the gains of the first century believers. We would all-too-easily make the mistake of thinking it was better or easier for them because they knew Jesus in the flesh. That's not what Jesus believed!

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.
John 16:7 ESV

OK, but what if He didn't die? What if He remained alive on earth and was still visibly present here directing all our operations personally? Wouldn't that be better? In no way! Even setting aside the impossible problem this would have created for world evangelism, it would have been

counter-productive in terms of our own life and growth. Please see [The Indwelling Presence](#) for more on this intriguing question.

What Ascension Means

1) The Holy Spirit's Descent

You can almost hear how urgent this was to the Lord in the passage quoted above. Jesus knew He had to *ascend* so that the Holy Spirit could *descend*. This does not mean that the Holy Spirit wasn't already active upon the earth—He is the Giver and Sustainer of life to all creatures on the planet, including us. Nevertheless, faith-conversion opens the way for the Holy Spirit to “descend” into our hearts (the deepest, darkest place in the world) and upon our lives (see [New Life in the Power of the Spirit](#)).

"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come." John 16:4-13 ESV

Jesus said that He must go so that the Spirit of truth can come—to lead us into all truth. There are “many things” Jesus has to say to us, but He can only do it by the Spirit who speaks uniquely and individually into our depths. What Jesus has to reveal to each of us includes who we are apart from Him and who we are united to Him. He comes by His Spirit to reveal ourselves to ourselves as well as to reveal God to us. This cannot be done in a classroom setting—it evidently takes the Holy Spirit speaking to us in the hidden depths of our hearts.

2) Jesus' Intercession

In being raised to the Father's right hand, Jesus is in the perfect position to intercede for us. This must be immensely important for it is mentioned several times in scripture. Our conversation, whether of prayer, petition or praise can be instantaneous. He gives us a standing invitation to “come boldly” to the throne of grace and receive mercy and help anytime we need it.

Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised— who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Romans 8:34 ESV

3) Jesus' Presence

From heaven He can be with all of us by His Spirit. We don't have to go looking Him for in Timbuktu or wait for Him to come our way from His latest visit to Siberia. We are even in some real, though mysterious, sense “seated with Him in the heavenlies.” This means that He is always dwelling in us on earth by His Spirit and we are always dwelling with Him through our spiritual “ascent” into the heavenlies. At the very least that should assure us that we are well connected to our Source of life and grace.

4) Jesus' Preparations

From heaven, He can prepare the earth for His final coming. His return, however, will stop the salvation clock. No one will have any time left to make a decision. Therefore, Jesus remaining in heaven (for the time being) ensures that everyone down here has the opportunity to be drawn to faith if they are willing. It also ensures that He has plenty of time on His Hands to do what He told the disciples He was heading Home to do: prepare a place for us.

5) Our Faith-Vision

Because our hearts hold images so powerfully, it makes a difference if our heart reflexively looks to Jesus as dying on the cross, or as being “back there” still walking through the pages of scripture in ancient Israel. No! He is Alive! He has ascended far beyond the cross. He is not primarily suffering for us right now, He is rejoicing over us and putting plans in place for each moment coming up and arranging a place in heaven for our ultimate arrival there—among many other things. You and I need to fix our eyes on an ascended, fully glorified Lord, the One who has power in every instant to come to our aid: Jesus Christ!

6) Jesus' Glorification

It is only right that after doing so terrible and noble a Work at His request that the Father would unhesitatingly want to raise Jesus all the way to the highest position of Glory and enthronement. Such is the Father's desire to reward His Only Begotten Son.

According to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. Ephesians 1:19-23 ESV

Explore More about Jesus

[The Joy of the Lord](#) Without a doubt, the joy of the Lord is our strength. Why else would the enemy be so dead set on robbing us of it? With this joy we have an inner confidence which enables us to “leap over walls” (sail over the obstacles of life). With this joy we feel invincible even in the midst of troubles. And—get this—we have 3 tremendous ways of entering into the joy of the Lord!

[His Coming Again](#) You don't have to wait for Jesus to return to experience the peace and power of His reign. His Kingdom comes whenever we trust and obey Him as Lord. But even that can't hold a candle to what it will be like when the Light of the World returns to establish His Kingdom on earth forever. There are incontrovertible signs that the long-awaited Day is closer than you might think. Prepare to be very excited by this...Jesus actually expects us to discern the "signs of the times."



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Scriptures on His Glorious Ascension

Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God. Luke 24:50-53 ESV

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." Acts 1:6-11 ESV

And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. Hebrews 10:11-14 ESV

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For over a decade Steve Evans and [Healing Streams](#) have been helping people recover inner peace and freedom through the free eCourse for healing, [Matters of the Heart](#). Through Forerunners4Him he has been showing how we can be saved for heaven and teaching the way to live a Spirit-filled life on earth. Go now to receive a completely free primer, [Getting to Heaven](#) and/or an introduction to [Living in the Spirit](#) at our website.



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