



Summary

What would we be without Jesus? This profound question sits at the heart of an exploration into one of Scripture's most spectacular yet often overlooked events: the Ascension of Christ. As we journey through Acts chapter 1, we witness something that should shake us to our core—Jesus, in full view of His disciples, ascending into the Shekinah glory of God. This wasn't a disappearance into ordinary clouds, but an entrance into the very presence of the Almighty. The Ascension proves seven critical truths: heaven is real, Jesus is exactly who He claimed to be, He has existed from eternity past, He has power over all creation, He willingly laid down His life for us, His finished work at the cross is sufficient for our salvation, and most thrilling of all—He is coming again. Just as Elisha witnessed Elijah's departure and went on to perform greater works through the power he received, we too are positioned to do greater works than even Jesus did during His earthly ministry. How? Because He went to the Father and sent us the Holy Spirit. The disciples who watched Jesus ascend were left with a choice: despair over His departure or trust in His promise to return and empower them. We face the same choice today. Will we live in the reality that Jesus authored our faith through His resurrection and finished it through His ascension to the right hand of God? This isn't about religion or church attendance—it's about a living relationship with the One who conquered death, gravity, and every limitation to prove He is Lord of all.





Points

Title: Where Would We Be Without Jesus? The Power of Christ's Ascension

Sermon Summary: This sermon explores the profound significance of Jesus' ascension into heaven and its impact on the faith of His disciples and believers today. Through examining Acts 1:12 and related passages, the message emphasizes that while Jesus' resurrection authored our faith, His ascension finished or completed it by proving seven critical truths: there is a heaven, Jesus is who He claimed to be, He has existed from eternity past, He has power over creation, He was not killed by man but willingly laid down His life, His sacrifice alone saves us, and He is coming again. The sermon challenges believers to consider where they would be without Jesus and emphasizes that as believers, we are never without Him. It concludes with Peter's actions in replacing Judas Iscariot, establishing biblical principles for leadership and decision-making in the early church.

Key Points:

- Jesus' ascension into the Shekinah glory of God was one of the most spectacular events in Scripture, comparable only to Elijah's ascension
- The ascension removed all doubt and finished the faith that the resurrection had authored
- Seven proofs of the ascension: heaven exists, Jesus is God, He is eternal, He is Creator, He willingly sacrificed Himself, His work saves us, and He will return
- Elisha's witness of Elijah's ascension empowered him to perform greater works, paralleling how believers would do greater works after Jesus' ascension
- The 120 disciples waited in unity and prayer for the promise of the Holy Spirit
- Peter established two foundational principles: all Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and he defined the qualifications for apostleship
- Peter's decision to replace Judas Iscariot, while debated, demonstrated faithfulness to Scripture and practical wisdom
- Mary is honored but not venerated beyond what Scripture teaches
- Modern claims to apostleship cannot meet the biblical standard of having witnessed Jesus from His baptism through His resurrection and ascension
- The central question for every believer and church: Where would we be without Jesus?

Scripture Reference:

- Acts 1:9-26 (primary focus on verse 12)
- 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 (early church creed of resurrection appearances)
- 2 Kings 2:8-18 (Elijah's ascension witnessed by Elisha)
- John 14:12 (believers will do greater works)
- Hebrews 12:1-2 (Jesus as author and finisher of faith)
- Matthew 28:16-20 (the Great Commission)
- John 3:16, John 8:58, John 10:18, John 19:30, John 20:22
- 2 Timothy 3:16 (all Scripture is God-breathed)



- Psalm 69:25 and Psalm 109:8 (Peter's scriptural basis for replacing Judas)
- Revelation 21:14 (twelve foundations with apostles' names)

Stories:

- Elijah's ascension into heaven by whirlwind with chariots of fire, witnessed by Elisha (2 Kings 2)
- Elisha's subsequent miracles demonstrating increased faith: helping the widow with oil, raising the Shunammite's son, purifying poisonous stew, feeding 100 men, healing Naaman's leprosy, making an axe head float, and revealing Syrian battle plans
- Elisha's servant seeing the spiritual realm filled with horses and chariots of fire surrounding them
- Jesus' post-resurrection appearances to over 500 people, establishing the credibility of His resurrection
- The dramatic account of Judas Iscariot's death in the field of blood (Akeldama)
- Peter's restoration and leadership in the upper room with 120 disciples
- The selection of Matthias to replace Judas through casting lots, using the Urim and Thummim method
- Matthias' later martyrdom in Jerusalem according to Foxe's Book of Martyrs
- Billy Graham referenced as an example of apostolic ministry in modern times, though not meeting the biblical office of apostle





Scripture

Explicitly Mentioned References:

1. Acts 1:12 - Main text of the sermon
2. Acts 1:9 - Jesus' ascension
3. Acts 1:3-8 - Jesus' appearances and commands
4. 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 - Early creed about resurrection appearances
5. 2 Kings 2:8-18 - Elijah's ascension
6. John 21 - Jesus meeting with seven apostles, restoring Peter
7. John 8:58 - "Before Abraham was, I am"
8. John 1:3 - Jesus as creator
9. John 10 - Jesus laying down His life (specific verse not given, likely John 10:17-18)
10. John 19:30 - "It is finished"
11. John 3:16 - God so loved the world
12. Matthew 17 - Mount of Transfiguration
13. Matthew 28:16-20 - The Great Commission
14. Hebrews 12:1-2 - Cloud of witnesses, author and finisher of faith
15. Revelation 11 - Two witnesses
16. 2 Kings 3 - Elisha's ministry (various miracles)
17. 2 Kings 4 - Elisha raising the dead, feeding miracles
18. 2 Kings 5 - Healing of Naaman
19. 2 Kings 6:8-17 - Elisha and the Syrian army, spiritual sight
20. 1 Kings 19 - Elijah calling Elisha
21. John 14:12 - Greater works
22. Acts 1:15-26 - Choosing Matthias
23. Psalm 69:25 - Quoted by Peter
24. Psalm 109:3 - Quoted by Peter (likely verse 8)
25. Revelation 21:14 - Twelve foundations with apostles' names
26. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 - All Scripture is God-breathed
27. John 20:22 - Receive the Holy Spirit

Alluded to but Not Explicitly Cited:

28. Exodus 3:14 - "I AM" (referenced in discussion of John 8:58)
29. 1 Kings 8 - Solomon's temple filled with God's glory (Shekinah glory reference)
30. Acts 2 - Day of Pentecost (mentioned as 10 days after ascension)
31. Matthew 27:3-10 - Judas' death (complementary account to Acts 1)

Thematically Relevant Verses (Not Directly Mentioned):

32. Luke 24:50-53 - Another account of the ascension
33. Ephesians 4:8-10 - Christ's ascension and giving gifts
34. Philippians 2:9-11 - Jesus exalted to the highest place



- 35. Colossians 1:16-17 - All things created through Christ
- 36. Acts 1:4-5 - Promise of the Holy Spirit
- 37. Romans 8:34 - Christ at the right hand of God





Quotes

If Jesus authored our faith by his resurrection from the dead, I believe he finished our faith by being seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus' ascension into the Shekinah glory of God is one of the most spectacular events of all the spectacular events recorded in the Bible.

Where would we be without Jesus? As believers, we are never without Jesus.

All Scripture is inspired, God breathed. The Holy Spirit will never, ever direct you in a path that diverges even one iota from what the word of God declares.

Jesus was not killed by man. He laid down his life willingly. It is Jesus' willing sacrifice for our sin that saves us from our sin, never our works.

The only thing that matters is Jesus. If we're not teaching Jesus, we might as well close the doors.

Death is not the end of life. Death is merely a portal through which we enter into eternity, and you really only have, if there is an option, it's hell or heaven.



Discussion Questions

How does witnessing Jesus' ascension into the Shekinah glory of God compare to Elisha witnessing Elijah's departure, and what impact do such spectacular events have on faith and future ministry?

In what ways does Jesus' ascension prove not only that heaven exists, but also validate all His claims about His identity and mission?

Why do you think some of the eleven apostles still doubted even after seeing Jesus resurrected, and what does this reveal about human nature and the need for complete faith?

How does Jesus being both the author and finisher of our faith, as described in Hebrews 12:2, shape our understanding of salvation as His work rather than ours?

What does it mean practically for believers today that we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, and how should this awareness affect our daily walk with Christ?

Was Peter's decision to replace Judas through casting lots an act of faithful obedience or getting ahead of God's timing, and what principles should guide our decision-making today?

How does the biblical standard for apostleship established in Acts 1:21-22 challenge modern claims of apostolic office, and why is this distinction important for the church?

What role does Mary play in this passage compared to how she is sometimes venerated in church tradition, and what does this teach us about proper biblical reverence?

The sermon asks where would we be without Jesus multiple times. How would you personally answer this question for your own life and for the church today?

How does understanding that death is merely a portal to eternity rather than the end change the way we view our choices and priorities in this present life?



Small Group Guide: The Ascension of Jesus

Based on Acts 1:9-26

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by thanking God for His Word and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and application.

Ice Breaker

Share a time when you witnessed something so spectacular that it changed your perspective forever. How did that experience impact you?

Key Sermon Points

1. The Spectacular Nature of Jesus' Ascension

Jesus ascended into the Shekinah glory of God—not a regular cloud, but the very presence of God. This spectacular event proved multiple truths about who Jesus is.

2. What the Ascension Proves

- *There is a heaven*
- *Jesus is who He said He is—God*
- *Jesus has existed from eternity past*
- *Jesus has power over all creation*
- *Jesus was not killed by man; He laid down His life willingly*
- *Jesus' willing sacrifice saves us from sin*
- *Jesus is coming again*

3. Preparing for Jesus' Return

The disciples waited in prayer and unity, preparing themselves for what Jesus promised—the baptism of the Holy Spirit and power to be His witnesses.



4. Where Would We Be Without Jesus?

The central question: As believers, we are never without Jesus. Everything we do must center on Him.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. **Read Acts 1:9-11.** Why do you think God chose such a dramatic way for Jesus to leave the earth? What impact would this have had on the disciples who witnessed it?
2. **Compare Elijah's ascension (2 Kings 2:11-15) with Jesus' ascension.** What similarities and differences do you notice? What did these events accomplish for those who witnessed them?
3. **Read Acts 1:21-22.** What were Peter's criteria for choosing a replacement for Judas? Why were these qualifications so specific?

Personal Reflection

4. **The sermon mentioned that "some doubted" even after seeing the resurrected Jesus (Matthew 28:17).** Have you ever struggled with doubt in your faith? What helped remove that doubt or strengthen your faith?
5. **The ascension proves Jesus is coming again (Acts 1:11).** How does this truth impact the way you live your daily life? Should it change anything about your priorities?
6. **The 120 disciples waited together in prayer "with one accord" (Acts 1:14).** What does unity in prayer look like in practical terms? What hinders this kind of unity in the church today?

Application

7. **The sermon asked: "Where would we be without Jesus?"** Take turns sharing your personal answer to this question. How has Jesus changed your life?
8. **Peter established that all Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:16).** How do you currently use Scripture to make decisions in your life? What could improve in this area?



9. **The disciples were commanded to "wait" for the promise of the Father.** Is God calling you to wait for something right now? How can this group support you in faithful waiting?
10. **The sermon emphasized that Jesus must be the central focus of everything the church does.** How can we ensure Jesus remains central in:
- Our personal lives?
 - Our small group?
 - Our church ministries?
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Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Jesus' ascension was a spectacular, undeniable proof of His deity and His promises**
 - ✓ **The ascension guarantees Jesus is coming again in the same manner He left**
 - ✓ **Scripture must be the sole basis for our decisions and discernment of truth**
 - ✓ **We are never without Jesus—He is with us always, even to the end of the age**
 - ✓ **Everything we do as believers should center on Jesus Christ alone**
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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

1. **Daily Reflection:** Each morning, ask yourself: "Where would I be without Jesus?" Let this question shape your gratitude and priorities for the day.
2. **Scripture-Based Decision Making:** Face a decision you need to make this week. Before acting, search Scripture for principles that apply. Share what you discover with the group next week.
3. **Waiting in Prayer:** Set aside 15-30 minutes daily to wait on the Lord in prayer, asking Him to fill you with His Holy Spirit and prepare you for whatever He has next.



4. **Jesus-Centered Audit:** Evaluate one area of your life (work, relationships, entertainment, finances). Ask: "Is Jesus central here, or have other things taken His place?"
 5. **Ascension Meditation:** Read Acts 1:9-11 each day this week. Imagine yourself as one of the disciples watching Jesus ascend. What would you feel? How would it change you?
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Prayer Focus

Spend time praying together for:

- **Gratitude** for Jesus' sacrifice, resurrection, and ascension
 - **Anticipation** for Jesus' return—that we would live in light of His coming
 - **Unity** within your group and church body
 - **Power** to be faithful witnesses for Christ
 - **Those who don't know Jesus**—that they would come to faith in Him
 - **Specific needs** within your group
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Closing Reflection

Read together Hebrews 12:1-2:

"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Before Next Week

- Read Acts 2:1-21 in preparation for your next discussion
 - Follow through on your practical application commitment
 - Pray for each member of your group by name
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Leader Notes

- **Be sensitive** to those who may be questioning their faith or struggling with doubt
- **Create space** for honest conversation about where Jesus is (or isn't) central in people's lives
- **Avoid judgment** regarding denominational differences (the sermon mentions Catholic practices)
- **Emphasize grace**—remember how patient God was with the early disciples
- **End on hope**—we are never without Jesus!





Daily Devotional

5-Day Devotional: Where Would We Be Without Jesus?

Day 1: The Spectacular Ascension

Reading: Acts 1:1-11

Devotional:

The disciples stood watching as Jesus ascended into the Shekinah glory of God—a moment as spectacular as any recorded in Scripture. This wasn't merely Jesus disappearing; this was the Author and Finisher of our faith taking His rightful seat at the throne of God. His ascension proved everything: there is a heaven, Jesus is who He said He is, He has power over all creation, and most wonderfully, He is coming again.

When doubt creeps into your faith, remember what the disciples witnessed. Jesus didn't just rise from the dead—He ascended to heaven in power and glory. This same Jesus will return in like manner. Let this truth anchor your soul today. Where would you be without Jesus? The better question is: where are you with Him right now?

Day 2: Waiting in Faith

Reading: Acts 1:12-14; Luke 24:49

Devotional:

After witnessing Jesus' ascension, the disciples faced an uncertain waiting period. They didn't know it would be ten days until Pentecost, yet they remained faithful to Jesus' command: wait for the promise of the Father. Notice what they did while waiting—they devoted themselves to prayer with one accord.

True faith isn't passive; it's active waiting. These 120 believers prepared themselves through unified prayer for something they didn't fully understand. How often do we demand clarity before obedience? The disciples teach us that faithfulness to Jesus' word, even when we don't comprehend the full picture, positions us to receive His promises.

What has Jesus asked you to wait for? Are you preparing yourself through prayer and unity with other believers, or are you growing impatient? Trust His timing today.



Day 3: The Foundation of Witnesses

Reading: Acts 1:15-22; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

Devotional:

Peter stood among the 120 and established a crucial principle: apostleship required being an eyewitness to Jesus' entire ministry, from John's baptism through the resurrection and ascension. This wasn't about titles or positions—it was about testimony grounded in personal encounter with the risen Christ.

While we cannot meet the apostolic standard Peter outlined, we are all called to be witnesses. You may not have walked with Jesus in first-century Galilee, but if you know Him, you have a testimony. The Holy Spirit within you testifies to the reality of Christ just as powerfully as those first witnesses.

What has Jesus done in your life? Your story matters. Someone needs to hear how Christ has transformed you. Don't minimize your witness because you haven't performed miracles. Your changed life is the miracle that points others to Him.

Day 4: Scripture as Our Foundation

Reading: 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Psalm 69:25; Psalm 109:8

Devotional:

When Peter needed to make a critical decision about replacing Judas, he didn't rely on human wisdom or popular opinion. He turned to Scripture, declaring, "This Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke." Even in passages we might never connect to the situation, Peter found God's direction.

All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable. The Holy Spirit will never lead you contrary to God's written Word. In our age of countless voices claiming divine direction, we must anchor ourselves in this truth: if it contradicts Scripture, it's not from God.

Are you facing a decision today? Don't just seek a feeling or a sign. Search the Scriptures. The same Holy Spirit who inspired the Word illuminates it for those who seek Him. Let God's Word, not contemporary culture or personal preference, be the sole basis for your choices.

Day 5: Never Without Jesus

Reading: Hebrews 12:1-2; Matthew 28:16-20

Devotional:

"Where would we be without Jesus?" This question haunted the disciples as they watched Him ascend. Yet the remainder of Acts answers definitively: as believers, we are never without Jesus. Though He physically departed, He sent the Holy Spirit and promised, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."



Jesus authored your faith through His resurrection and finished it through His ascension and session at God's right hand. He is the chief leader and completer of your faith. Some disciples doubted even after seeing the resurrected Christ, but the ascension removed all uncertainty. He is Lord of all.

Today, fix your eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith. You are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. The same power that raised Christ from the dead dwells in you. Run your race with endurance, knowing that without Jesus, you would have no hope—but with Him, you have everything.

