

Ascension of Our Lord, Jesus Christ

We think of Easter as the conclusion of Jesus' ministry. He was put to death on the cross and then rose again from the grave on Resurrection Sunday (Easter). He even said from the cross, "It is finished" (John 19:30). Now, all believers can receive the forgiveness of sins and seek the path to eternal life. But what happened after the resurrection? And, what about those skeptics who didn't believe in the resurrection? Was it all a magic show – an illusion?

Following the resurrection, Jesus spent the next 40 days with His disciples, teaching them for the next steps in sharing the Gospel. During those 40 days, Jesus cooked and ate meals with them and ministered to them.

Many people saw Jesus die on the cross and publicly affirmed Him to be dead. During the 40 days following the resurrection, Jesus was publicly affirmed as alive again. Over 500 people witnessed the resurrected Jesus as He walked again on the face of this earth. Appearing before the witnesses was important to the resurrection's believability. Over the next century, the witnesses' stories were cross-examined and investigated by skeptics and ultimately proven true. There is no question that He came back to life again.

After 40 days, it was now time for Jesus to ascend into Heaven. Jesus led His disciples to Bethany, where He blessed them before ascending into heaven. *When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven (Luke 24:50-51).* The hands He lifted up to heaven revealed the nail holes from the cross. The account in Acts (see below) tells us that Jesus told the disciples to go to Jerusalem and wait for the Holy Spirit to descend on them. What did He want them to do in Jerusalem? Initially, He told them to wait. Remember, the Great Commission? *Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. (Matthew 28:16-20).* The Great Commission concludes with the promise, "I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).



The disciples went to Jerusalem to wait for the Holy Spirit to dwell within them.

The Holy Spirit would give them power. Their wait wouldn't be long. (But, that is for next week's devotional.)

For us, today, we can be assured that Jesus did live again and was seen by many witnesses. We can trust that the sins of believers will be forgiven. Jesus has now prepared the disciples and us for the task at hand. Next week, we will hear about the Holy Spirit, not only for the disciples, but for us, too.

The Bible Says: *The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:1-8).*

Portions of this devotional are from a Facebook post by Rev. Jeff Patterson and some references from Portals of Prayer (May 14, 2026)