

The Bible Story of the *Ascension of Jesus*, found in the first chapter of Acts, describes the ascent of Christ from the Earth to the Heavenly realm. According to Acts, the ascension of Jesus takes place 40 days after the resurrection in the presence of his disciples. Christ is risen up after advising them to stay in Jerusalem until the arrival of the Holy Spirit. As he raises, a cloud obscures him from their view, and two men in white arrive to tell them that he will return "in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." In Christian doctrine, the ascension is correlated with the deification of Jesus, meaning that through his ascension, Jesus took his seat at the right hand of God: "He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty."

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Acts 1:6-12

6 Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" **7** He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. **8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." **9** After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. **10** They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. **11** "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." **12** Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city.

Luke 24:50-53

50 When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. **51** While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. **52** Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. **53** And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

The meaning of the Ascension for Christians is derived from their belief in the glorification and exaltation of Jesus following his death and Resurrection, as well as from the theme of his return to God the Father. Thus, the Gospel According to John uses both the sayings of Jesus and his post-Resurrection appearances to indicate a new relationship between Jesus and his Father and between him and his followers, rather than a simple physical relocation from earth to heaven.

Scripture and observances

According to the first chapter of [The Acts of the Apostles](#), after appearing to the [Apostles](#) on various occasions during a period of 40 days, Jesus was taken up in their presence and was then hidden from them by a cloud, a frequent biblical image signifying the presence of God. Although belief in the Ascension is apparent in other books of the [New Testament](#), the emphasis and the imagery differ. In the [Gospel According to John](#), the glorification described by the Ascension story seems to have taken place immediately after the Resurrection. The imagery of the account in the [Gospel According to Luke](#) is similar to that of Acts, but there is no mention of a period of 40 days. The Ascension of Jesus is mentioned in the [Apostles' Creed](#), a profession of faith used for [baptism](#) in the early [church](#).

A distinctive feature of the feast's liturgy in the Western churches is the extinguishing of the Paschal candle, first lit on Easter, after the [Gospel](#) has been read, as a symbol of Christ's leaving the earth. Despite the idea of separation indicated in this act, which might be expected to set a note of sadness, the whole liturgy of Ascensiontide, through the 10 days to Pentecost, is marked by joy in the final triumph of the risen Lord. One of the central themes of the feast is the kingship of Christ, and the theological [implication](#) is that the Ascension was the final redemptive act conferring participation in the divine life on all who are members of Christ. In other words, Christ "was lifted up into heaven so that he might make us partakers of his Godhead."

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In the European [Middle Ages](#) the people's delight in the visual and dramatic found an outlet in various ritual practices that came to be associated with the feast. Popular customs included a procession in [imitation of Christ's](#) journey with his Apostles to the [Mount of Olives](#), as well as the raising of a crucifix or a statue of the risen Christ through an opening in the church roof.