

**He was Lifted Up**

Acts 1

Tony Chute, Interim Pastor

Overview: Acts is the story of how the church was founded upon the earthly ministry of Jesus and how it was empowered by the Spirit after the ascension of Jesus. Although the apostles were witnesses to the resurrection, they were unable in their own strength to bring people to saving faith in Christ; thus they were instructed to wait for the Holy Spirit to come upon them. Despite the daunting task that lies ahead, the apostles give every indication that they are prepared to spread the gospel throughout the known world. They gathered with other believers, devoted themselves to prayer, came under the authority of Scripture, trusted in the providence of God, and completed their apostolic team. What would have been unthinkable prior to the crucifixion has since become quite normal in the life of the church, namely that the physical absence of Jesus is no hindrance to the advancement of God's kingdom.

01. The ascension of Jesus marks the end of his earthly ministry and the beginning of His heavenly ministry, both of which are essential for our salvation. As the ascended Lord, Jesus presents His perfect sacrifice to the Father, intercedes on behalf of all believers, and awaits His appointed return as reigning king.

02. The formation of the church enables us to know Christ more intimately during His session in heaven. We grow closer to Him as we gather together, pray together, learn together, and exercise care over one another.

03. The mission of the church is to continue the ministry of Jesus through the power of the Spirit until Christ returns. The kingdom to which we now belong is spiritual in character, international in membership and gradual in its expansion.

This Promise is for You and for All

1. Luke mentions that Jesus appeared to the disciples and spoke to them about the kingdom of God during a forty-day period. Why do you suppose his teachings during this time were not preserved? Would we have substantially more information than what already exists in the four gospels?

2. Consider the following texts which describe or relate to the ascension of Jesus: Luke 24:50-53; John 6:61-62, 7:39, 16:4-7, 20:17; Acts 1:6-11, 2:32-36, 3:19-21, 5:30-31; Ephesians 4:7-8; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 8:1-5, 9:11-12, 23-24, 6:19-20; and 1 Peter 3:22. What truths can be derived regarding the ongoing ministry of Jesus as the ascended Lord?

3. The disciples initially gazed into heaven but were rebuked by the angels for doing so (verses 10-11). In what ways might Christians take their eyes off of their mission today? Do you think we focus too much on his second coming rather than our current mission? What tends to get you sidetracked from your responsibility to witness to others about the Lord?

4. Read Psalms 69 and 109 to grasp the context for Peter's decision to replace Judas. Would you agree that Peter's decision seems more obvious to him and his audience than to those who read the Psalms today? What does his understanding of the application of Scripture suggest about the role of the apostles and their ability to interpret Scripture rightly? See Luke 24:45 for further insight.

For Further Reading: Robert Peterson, *Salvation Accomplished by the Son* (Crossway, 2012).

This Promise is for You and for All