

LESSON 43

# The Ascension

ACTS 1:1-14



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**BIBLE TRUTH**

JESUS LEFT THE EARTH, BUT HE WILL COME AGAIN

**LESSON SNAPSHOT**

**1. OPENING REVIEW . . . . . 5 MIN**

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

**2. BIBLE STORY . . . . . 10 MIN**

Read Acts 1:1–14 from the Scriptures or read story 121, “The Ascension,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

**3. OBJECT LESSON 1 . . . . . 15 MIN**

**Helium Ascension with a Witness**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ a helium balloon with ribbon (Note: A Mylar balloon filled with helium could be purchased a day or two ahead and would still be inflated enough to release on a Sunday morning. A latex balloon will deflate quickly.)
- ✓ small card or church invitation
- ✓ reclosable plastic sandwich bag

**4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION . . . . . 10 MIN**

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

**5. OBJECT LESSON 2 . . . . . 10 MIN**

**Discuss His Return**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ Bibles for the class

**6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY . . . . . 5 MIN**

**7. ACTIVITY TIME . . . . . 10 MIN**

**The Ascension**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

**8. CLOSING PRAYER . . . . . 5 MIN**

**9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON . . . . . 15 MIN**

**Mary’s Story**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ Mary costume—a flat sheet, rope belt, sandals

**TOTAL 85 MIN**

## PREPARING TO TEACH

## TEACHING POINTS

**The book of Acts is part two of the story**—Luke is the author of Acts, which is really just a continuation of the gospel he wrote. We have four gospels, but we only have one book of Acts. In his opening, Luke gives a recap of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. He mentions that Jesus gave many convincing proofs that he was alive again (Acts 1:3). Many have tried to discredit the resurrection, but it is one of the most documented ancient events, with multiple witnesses. Luke reminds us of Jesus' charge to the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Although Jesus had breathed on them to receive the Holy Spirit, they were expecting and waiting for a greater outpouring of the Spirit's power.

**Jesus' ascension is the end of part one**—Although the ascension is at the beginning of the book of Acts, it is really the conclusion of part one; it concludes Jesus' earthly ministry. Just before Jesus rose up to heaven, the disciples asked the Lord if he was going to restore the kingdom to Israel at that very moment. It was a logical question; Jesus had conquered death, sin, and the devil. God could have brought the fallen world to a close right then and there. But there was another part to the story. Jesus spoke of it in the Great Commission. The disciples were to go into all the earth and spread the gospel message to people of every nation (Matthew 28:19). The end could not come until the gospel blessing spread to all nations. After all, that was God's promise to Abraham (Genesis 18:18). The disciples still seemed confused about what the restored kingdom was all about. It is a good thing for us that Jesus did not restore the kingdom because we wouldn't have been a part of it. Now we get to enjoy everlasting life with God in heaven!

After he answered the disciples, Jesus was taken up while they were watching. Like we might search for a balloon floating up in the sky, the disciples looked intently, hoping to catch another glimpse of the ascending Lord through the clouds.

**Waiting for power is how part two begins**—While the disciples were still looking up into the sky, two men dressed in white appeared and made a wonderful announcement. Jesus would return one day just as he left! Today, we still look forward to his return. Though it is not for us to know when (Acts 1:7), we should pray for his soon return.

The disciples, realizing the show was over, left the Mount of Olives and returned to the upper room, obeying the last command Jesus had given them: wait (Luke 24:49).

They were joined by Mary, the mother of Jesus, along with his brothers. What a joy it must have been for them to relay the story of Jesus' ascension to Mary. She had an incredible life. She experienced the visit of the first angel, witnessed his miracles, agonized through the suffering of her son, rejoiced at his resurrection, and then learned of his ascension into heaven. This is the last we hear of Jesus' mother, Mary.

## A LITTLE BIT MORE

### *Theophilus*

Luke addressed his gospel and the book of Acts to a man named Theophilus. The name means "one who loves God." Luke's purpose in writing is so that Theophilus might "have certainty concerning the things [he had] been taught" (Luke 1:4). Luke continues writing to this friend in the book of Acts (Acts 1:1). Luke adds the title "most excellent" before Theophilus's name (Luke 1:3), indicating him to be, most likely, a man of prominence. Theophilus is not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible, so more clues about his identity will have to wait until we perhaps see him in heaven.

## Where Is the Gospel? \_\_\_\_\_

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

If there were any lingering doubts that Jesus was God, they were silenced at his ascension. During the forty days before the ascension, Jesus had appeared on a number of occasions to the disciples. Each time he was met with doubters (Matthew 28:17). This time, doubt and fear are not mentioned. What a tender moment it was as the Lord said goodbye. For three years these men had lived with the Lord. They had learned much and were arguably the most privileged men on earth. They not only saw the Lord, but they also walked with him, laughed with him, were afraid with him and for him, watched him die, and then saw him rise again.

Jesus blessed them and was taken up into heaven. Their last act was to worship the man they had come to believe was God. From there, they went to the temple, where they praised God continually. Likely the curtain, torn in two at the death of Christ, was sewn together again. These men, however, now understood the gospel. Never again would another sacrifice for sin be needed. Jesus, the Lamb of God, had been slain—for them and for us.

THE LESSON

**OPENING REVIEW . . . . . 5 MIN**

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

**BIBLE STORY . . . . . 10 MIN**

Read Acts 1:1–14 from the Scriptures or read story 121, “The Ascension,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

**OBJECT LESSON 1 . . . . . 15 MIN**

**Helium Ascension with a Witness**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ a helium balloon with ribbon (Note: A Mylar balloon filled with helium could be purchased a day or two ahead and would still be inflated enough to release on a Sunday morning. A latex balloon will deflate quickly.)
- ✓ small card or church invitation
- ✓ reclosable plastic sandwich bag

If you do not have a church invitation, write out John 3:16 on a note card along with the name and address of your church and the time of your Sunday service. Place the church invitation or note card into the plastic reclosable plastic sandwich bag and tie it to the end of the balloon ribbon.

Take your class outside and read the account of the ascension from Acts 1:1–9. Then let the balloon go and have the children watch it until it vanishes from sight. Then read verses 10–11. Tell the children that the time of Jesus’ return is hidden so that we will never know when he will reappear in the sky. That is why Jesus told us always to be ready.

Remind the children of Jesus’ last command—that the disciples should take the gospel into all the world.

**TEACHING/DISCUSSION**

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

**OBJECT LESSON 2 . . . . . 10 MIN**

**Discuss His Return**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ Bibles for the class

At Christ’s ascension, the angels dressed in white told the disciples that Jesus would return again. Jesus told the disciples he would return for them (John 14:3). Paul talks about the return of the Lord in 1 Thessalonians 4:15—5:9. After reading the account of the ascension, read Paul’s teaching on the return of the Lord in 1 Thessalonians. Then answer the following questions as a class:

- **What do we learn about the Lord’s return?**  
*(The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night when people are least expecting it.)*
- **How should we live in light of the fact that we do not know when the Lord will return?**  
*(We should live self-controlled and alert lives, obeying Jesus’ words.)*
- **If someone tells you they know the day the world is going to end or the day the Lord is going to return, should you believe them?**  
*(No. Clearly, Scripture tells us that nobody knows the hour or the day.)*

**SWORD BIBLE MEMORY . . . . . 5 MIN**

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

**ACTIVITY TIME . . . . . 10 MIN**

**The Ascension**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Draw a picture of Jesus ascending up into the clouds and write the words “He will come back the same way he left” as a banner over your drawing.

**CLOSING PRAYER . . . . . 5 MIN**

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's Scripture passages.

**BONUS OBJECT LESSON . . . . . 15 MIN**

**Mary's Story**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ Mary costume—a flat sheet, rope belt, sandals

Tell about the last forty days of Jesus' life from his mother Mary's perspective. Include the following key events:

- **Jesus' arrest and crucifixion**  
*(John 19:25)*
- **Jesus' resurrection**  
*(We can assume Jesus appeared to his mother as one of the five hundred mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15:6.)*
- **Jesus' ascension**  
*(Mary was waiting in the upper room [Acts 1:14].)*

Feel free to embellish the character of Mary since we have few details from her life. Make sure you include Mary's gratitude for her own salvation. Mary can end with, "Jesus said he would return just as he left, and, if it is not in my lifetime, I know I will see him again in heaven."

In closing, emphasize that the people we read about in the Bible were real people. Help them understand that for those who believe, we will one day all meet in heaven.