

SERMON

01 June 2025, Scottsville Community Church, 9 am

A TOPICAL SERMON

The Ascension of Jesus & its Significance

OUTLINE

- What has the ascension accomplished for Jesus?
- What has the ascension accomplished for our redemption?
- What does it mean to say Jesus is Lord?
- Where is Jesus Lord?
- So what?

INTRODUCTION

Forty days after his resurrection, Jesus ascended to a Place. That place is called Heaven. The Ascension Day always falls on a Thursday – this year **29 May 2025**.

We find this narrative:

*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. **Luke 24: 50-53***

This is a **historical** event. It took place close to Bethany. It was a **happy** occasion. It was a glorious occasion for he **'was taken up in glory'** – 1 Timothy 3:16. **God was pleased with him** and accepted his work.

*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." – **Acts 1:6-11***

The heavens spoke too! He had been taken **into heaven** and from heaven he will come back.

Heaven is up there because that was the direction Jesus took, **into the sky**, and the angels confirmed that is where he had gone.

First, I want to look at what the ascension meant for Jesus.

- **What has the ascension accomplished for Jesus?**

Jesus has always been God but *'he has not always been Lord'*, says **Adrio Konig**.

'He has received glory and honour that had not been his before as the God-Man.'
Wayne Grudem

As God: He longed to return to his **glory which he had voluntarily** set aside to take on the **work of a servant** who would die to redeem mankind. At his ascension, he would take up this glory again.

*And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. - **John 17:5***

As God-Man: But Jesus would be returning to **heaven not as God** but as God-Man. **In his new form**, he received a different kind of glory:

As the ascended God-Man, Jesus received the **authority to send the Holy Spirit** to his disciples:

Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. – Acts 2:33

As the ascended God-Man, he has been **made both Lord and Messiah**:

*34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says: ‘**The Lord said to my Lord**, sit at my right hand, 35 until I make your enemies your footstool.’ 36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has **made him both Lord and Christ**, this Jesus whom you crucified.’*

– **Acts 2:34-36**

*9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name...11 and every tongue confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father. - **Philippians 2:9***

*After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become much superior to angels as the **name he has inherited** is more excellent than theirs. **Hebrews 1:3-4***

John Macarthur comments on this verse as follows:

That name is Lord. No angel is sovereign Lord.

As the ascended God-Man, the **worship he receives in heaven is consistent with his work of redemption**:

*Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing! – **Revelation 5:12***

As the ascended Lord, he was enthroned above **every name** and **became the head of the church**, his body:

Ephesians 1:20-23 and **1 Pe.3:22**

The glory of the latter house was greater!

Second, I want us to look at why his ascension was necessary for those who are saved?

- **What has the ascension of Jesus accomplished for our redemption?**

(a) The first has to do with Eternal security.

Romans 8: 35 -39

Note the last two words in verse 39 – ‘**our Lord**’. Our security is linked not to his forgiveness and our justification **but also to his lordship**. The things that can ruin our standing with God are under his feet. So, he could say such things **as ‘no one can snatch them from my hands’**. Those who are truly born-again can not die in sin for they cannot lose their salvation. **Bayagcinwa, noma ungathini! Because He is Lord!**

(b) The second relates to the Great commission. Jesus obviously said this in anticipation of the ascension.

Matthew 28:19-20

By whose authority have we started this church? **Who authorises me to preach to you today?** It’s not the government. It’s not the mayor. It’s not the SA Council of Churches. **It’s not some spiritual father somewhere. Jesus has commanded.** Jesus has authorised. Jesus will empower. **Jesus has promised his protection.** We can take him at his word because ‘**all authority’ has been given to him.**’

Our security and evangelism and discipleship is secure because of Jesus the Lord. **But what does it mean to call Jesus Lord?** That’s my third point.

- **What does it mean to say Jesus is Lord?**

I would like to return to **Philippians 2:9-11**:

“...so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow...and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is LORD...”

These words that Paul applies to Jesus come **directly from Isaiah 45:23** where God, the Father, had been speaking.

‘By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness, a word that shall not return: To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.’

In Isaiah 45, LORD (Yahweh) is speaking. In Philippians 2, the Son is referred to as the Lord. **Paul applies Isaiah 45 to Jesus.** To both, all knees bow and all tongues confess. The inescapable conclusion is **that the** Lord (*kurios*) of the **New Testament is the same person as the Yahweh of the Old Testament.** **Jesus is being equated with God. See also 1 Cor. 8: 6 – that’s how the early church understood Jesus.**

Jesus is Lord means Jesus is God. It also means that he **rules sovereignly over all.**

David had this same understanding:

*34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says: ‘**The Lord (YHWH - kurios) said to my Lord (Adonai-kurios), sit at my right hand, 35 until I make your enemies your footstool.**’*

Peter, in his commentary to David’s words, confirms:

*36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has **made him both Lord and Christ**, this Jesus whom you crucified.’*

– **Acts 2:34-36**

If Jesus has been given a name above all names, such authority, **where is he Lord?**
That's the subject of my fourth point.

- **Where is Jesus Lord?**

We now return to David's prophecy and Paul's triumph.

a) **Jesus is Lord in all the earth.**

- His plans cannot be thwarted by anything and by anyone.
 - The persecution of the church in Acts is the reason the gospel reached South Africa!
 - Even the ugly aspects of our lives work **'together for good'**. Rom 8:28 doesn't say 'for our good'. It says for good. For his glory. For the good of his plans.
- The absence of large-scale miracles in the **epistles and today** serves as proof. As was in the days of Noah. People were eating and drinking and getting married. Ordinary events move history forward. **Only a powerless God works in the world through miracles.**
 - He is at work in your life. This is true to the minute details of your life. All the **'erratic' aspects of life at some point come together** and we are amazed that all along God has been at work.
 - We suffer from **short-sightedness** and blindness.
 - **Our own desire to control events of life** make us not see the **powerful hand of God at play.**
- He is in control over all the forces of darkness. **The only thing we ever need to worry about is sin.** That's the only way satan can gain entrance into a believer's life. Thina **asithakatheki. Asidliseki.**

- b) **He is Lord in the hearts of believers, his Church.** The church is the visible manifestation of the Kingdom of God on Earth. **A disobedient and unholy church has no message to anyone.** **The church exists to display his glory.**

Lastly, I want to ask why does this teaching matter?

- **So what?**

- a) **To say 'Jesus is Lord'** is to claim that he is equal to the Father. No man can reach that conclusion in his own strength and anyone who confesses that truth is truly converted (1Corinthians 12:3 and Romans 10:9). **This is a doctrinal test!** No one comes to the Father except through the Son.

QUESTION: When did you receive Jesus into your life as Lord (to come under his authority!) and Saviour (to ask for mercy)? What are you waiting for? If saved, are you telling others and enabling others to tell others?

- b) **The exalted Lord is also the head of the church. Love for his Church serves as the 'Love test' for true conversion.** We treasure other truly converted believers because we see in them the evidence of the kingdom of God. He who does not love the Church and is simply not born-again!

QUESTION: What are your dreams about this church? My dream is that we would become a sacred group of people that stands tall in Scottsville as the holy display of God's glory and hope for the sinner and the destitute. This calls you and I to take Christ's commands seriously: holiness, witness, prayer, giving, marriage, sex, mission, work etc. A church that is a display of God's glory is a growing church. A growing church doesn't necessarily have many members but it always has an influence on how people and society lives in relation to the King of glory.

- c) If **Jesus is Lord (aka if God's Kingdom has come to earth)** then our genuine prayer should be that his Lordship would grow to every area of our lives. This is the **moral test of genuine conversion.**

QUESTION: This coming week, where are you taking God's glory to? Which aspects of your life still need to come under his authority? When do you plan to hand over the control of these areas to Jesus?

- d) **Jesus is reigning NOW!** His kingdom is advancing. Each time you choose obedience, the kingdom grows. For every act of love for others, the kingdom advances. **QUESTION: If you believe Jesus has all authority, what is stopping you from making disciples? Who are you risking your life for?**