

A banner image featuring a city skyline at night with illuminated buildings. Overlaid on this is a dark, semi-circular shape with the words "OUTSIDE IN" in large, white, sans-serif capital letters. The shape is bordered by thick, curved lines in shades of pink and white.

OUTSIDE IN

OUTSIDE-IN: ACTS

SCRIPTURE: Acts 1:9: **ascension**.

There are a few events in the Bible that might push the boundaries of incredible.

incarnation: God becoming man

transfiguration: Elijah; Moses; Jesus

Matthew 17:1-5

1After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. 3Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

4Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."

5While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

Several incredible things happen in this story.

First, the text says Jesus was “transfigured” which means his appearance changed. His face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light.

Then two great heroes of the OT show up... Elijah and Moses. Pretty cool, right?

And if that's not enough... God speaks from heaven! Peter, James and John probably said...

“THAT’S INCREDIBLE!!”

miracles: Jesus turning water into wine

Jesus walking on water

Jesus raising the dead: Lazarus

Jesus feeding the 5,000

That would make a pretty good show wouldn't it?
Lots of oohs and aah then everyone says...

"THAT'S INCREDIBLE!!"

resurrection: Jesus coming back from the dead

"THAT'S INCREDIBLE!!"

Today we are going to talk about one more. It's one I had not thought about in those terms until I was preparing for this teaching.

Acts 1:9

⁹After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

The Ascension.

You think the disciples said in unison, "That's incredible!"?

Actually, the Bible says they were so astonished they just stood there looking up into the sky. They were

so enamored that they didn't even notice the angels who had joined them.

Acts 1:10

¹⁰They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.

Typically when an angel appeared, their first words were, "don't be afraid!" The people they appeared to were scared because they were terrifying heavenly creatures. But not in this case....

The disciples were so intent on what had just happened they didn't even notice that the angels had appeared.

And here's the angels' message...

Acts 1:11

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."

Pretty incredible, right? Jesus levitates right up out of sight and into the clouds. And then two angels appear! Crazy!

But I think the *implications* of the ascension are even *more incredible*.

Let me give you three...

THE ASCENSION MEANS:

**JESUS WORK ON EARTH WAS
FINISHED**

Jesus was able to leave this earth because his work was done. He had lived with the people. He had transferred his life to the apostles.

The work of redemption was complete. Listen to the prayer Jesus prayed in John 17...

John 17:4-5

⁴I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. ⁵And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

Jesus says it. I have finished the work I was sent here to do. The work of redemption.

And he prays that he would be brought back into the Father's presence.

"Glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began."

The Ascension marked the end of Jesus time on earth, but it also marked the completion of Jesus job of redemption.

He came. He died. He rose. He ascended. He's coming back.

Philippians 2:6-8

⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Jesus humbled himself and became human, became part of creation, he became a servant and died on the cross.

Now he ascends back to his proper position.

THE ASCENSION MEANS:

**JESUS WENT TO PREPARE
HEAVEN**

John 14:1-2

¹ "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ²My Father's house has many rooms; if that

were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?

Jesus left the earth, the work of redemption is finished, but he continues to work on our behalf.

Mark Moore, CORE 52

“Now he’s preparing a place for us in eternity, not as a construction worker building a heavenly mansion, but as a defense attorney defending us before God.”

Romans 8:31-34

³¹What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare his own

Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.

³⁴Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Jesus died for us, but he also is now interceding for us.

Have you ever thought about the idea that we need an attorney?

A good attorney will plead your case for you so that you don't have to.

You see, sometimes we need someone advocating for us.

That's what Jesus is doing for us right now.

Why is the ascension incredible? Because it gives Jesus direct access to God where he advocates for us. He intercedes for us.

THE ASCENSION MEANS:

**JESUS LEFT US WITH
A MISSION**

Just before Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father he said this...

Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Same with us spiritually. Jesus knew that we would not grow into all that he had created us to be if he just hung around.

We would just leave it up to him.

Jesus said...

go and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and **teaching them** to obey everything I have commanded you.

The ascension means that we are plan A and there is no plan B!

The ascension means Jesus completed the work of redemption and is now at the right hand of the father interceding for us. And it means we have a job to do... make disciples.

Small Group Questions:

1. During this time where we have felt disconnected from friends, church, and small groups, what have you been doing to stay connected to God?
2. What are some things that are recorded in Bible that you find to be incredible?
3. After 33 years (3 years of making disciples and preparing to send them out) Jesus goes back to the Father. Why do you think it was important did him to return to God?
4. Read Phil. 2:6-8 - what are somethings in this passage that tell us about Jesus' character?

5. As a follower of Jesus, our job is to make disciples. How do you feel you can best do that?
6. Hearing Dave say, "We are plan A in spreading the gospel" does this change your mind about your importance in letting people know about Jesus?
7. Do you ever feel overwhelmed in sharing Jesus with your neighbors? How can you become more comfortable?