



Introduction: A Waiting Filled with Glory

Jesus did not ascend immediately to Heaven after His glorious resurrection. According to the testimony of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, He waited **forty days** before ascending. This period, full of symbolism, was not wasted time nor a mere parenthesis. It was a spiritual school, a living seminary, a preparation for the mission that would change the course of history.

Why did Jesus wait 40 days to ascend? What does this number mean in the history of salvation? What did He do during those days? And what can we learn today, as 21st-century believers, from this holy waiting?

Let us break down, step by step, the profound biblical, theological, and pastoral content of this decisive lapse of time, to discover that these forty days still speak powerfully to the heart of the Church and to each one of us.

1. Sacred Chronology: What Do the Scriptures Say?

The biblical basis for the 40 days is found in the book of Acts:

*“He presented himself alive to them by many proofs after he had suffered, appearing to them during **forty days** and speaking about the kingdom of God.”*
— Acts 1:3

The number is not random. It is a divine choice, a pedagogy of God that we had already seen in many moments throughout the history of salvation:

- **40 days** of rain in Noah’s time (*Genesis 7:12*)
- **40 years** the people of Israel spent in the desert (*Numbers 14:33-34*)
- **40 days** Moses fasted on Mount Sinai (*Exodus 34:28*)
- **40 days** Elijah walked to Mount Horeb (*1 Kings 19:8*)
- **40 days** Jesus fasted in the desert before beginning His public ministry (*Matthew 4:2*)



Each of these moments marks a **time of purification, preparation, and transformation**. And so it was for the disciples: the 40 days after the Resurrection were a time of going from fear to mission, from confusion to certainty, from sorrow to paschal joy.

2. What Did Jesus Do During Those 40 Days?

Far from disappearing, Jesus becomes **present in a new way**: glorious, immortal, yet at the same time close, tangible, and real. He is not a ghost nor a mere idea; He is the same risen Christ who ate, spoke, and walked with His own.

Some of the most notable appearances during this period are:

- **To Mary Magdalene in the garden** (Jn 20:11-18)
- **To the disciples on the road to Emmaus** (Lk 24:13-35)
- **To the Eleven in the Upper Room** (Lk 24:36-49; Jn 20:19-23)
- **To doubting Thomas** (Jn 20:24-29)
- **To the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias** (Jn 21)
- **To more than five hundred brothers at once** (1 Cor 15:6)
- **Finally, on the Mount of Ascension** (Acts 1:6-11)

In all these appearances, Jesus performs three fundamental actions:

1. **Confirms the faith** of the disciples: it is no longer enough to follow Him—they must believe in Him as the risen Lord.
 2. **Opens the Scriptures**: He explains how everything that happened was already foretold, and He gives them the key to understanding it.
 3. **Prepares them for the mission**: He does not leave them orphaned but promises the Holy Spirit and sends them out to evangelize the world.
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3. The Theological Relevance of the Number 40

The number 40, in the Bible, represents a **complete time of testing or preparation**. It is not an arbitrary figure, but one that speaks of the **passage from the old to the new creation**. With the resurrection, a new stage in human history begins: the Kingdom of God



has definitively broken in.

During those 40 days, Jesus:

- **Manifests His victory over death**
- **Initiates the time of the Church**, preparing His apostles as witnesses
- **Shows that the resurrected body is not mere spiritualization, but transfiguration of creation**
- **Anticipates eternal life**, revealing the final destiny of humanity

It is a time of transition: **Christ no longer walks with us as before, but He does not abandon us either**. These days prepare the great mystery of the **Ascension**, and then the **outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost**.

4. Practical Applications: How to Live These 40 Days Today

Although not every year's liturgical calendar details each of the 40 days between Easter and the Ascension, **the Church celebrates them as the Easter Season**.

Here is a theological and pastoral guide to make the most of this period in our daily lives:

□ 1. Live in Paschal Joy

This is not superficial happiness, but the **deep certainty that Christ has triumphed**. It transforms how we see suffering, death, illness, and everything that weighs us down.

***Practical advice:** Keep a Paschal journal where each day you write one reason for joy that comes from your faith in the risen Christ.*



□ 2. Let Yourself Be Taught by the Risen One

Jesus used these days to teach. Today He still does so through prayer, Scripture, and the liturgy.

Practical advice: Set aside time each day to read the Easter Gospels (Jn 20-21, Lk 24, Mt 28, Mk 16) and meditate on them as if you were one of the disciples.

□ 3. Revive Your Faith in the Eucharist

The risen Jesus is made present in the breaking of the bread.

Practical advice: Attend the Eucharist with more fervor, especially during the Easter Sundays, and rediscover the value of the Sacrament as a real encounter with the Risen One.

□ 4. Prepare to Be a Witness

The disciples were not left gazing at the sky. Jesus Himself told them:

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses...” (Acts 1:8)

Practical advice: Make a list of people to whom you could announce the Gospel with your words, your witness, or a work of mercy.



□ 5. Yearn for the Holy Spirit

The end of the 40 days marks the beginning of the Upper Room, where the apostles prayed awaiting Pentecost.

***Practical advice:** Each night, pray a short invocation: “Come, Holy Spirit, and renew my life as You renewed the face of the earth at Pentecost.”*

5. The Message for Today: Living in Hopeful Transition

Many Christians live in a kind of “spiritual in-between”: between inherited faith and lived faith, between pain and healing, between the cross and the joy of the resurrection. The 40 days of Jesus are also **our 40 days**, because each of us is called to live that transition **from fear to mission**.

Just like then, the Risen Christ still:

- Appears in the ordinary
- Reveals Himself in the Word
- Breaks bread with us
- Calls us by name

And finally, He ascends to Heaven not to leave us, but to **open the way** to the Father. The Ascension is not a farewell, but a fulfilled promise:

*“And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age”
(Matthew 28:20)*



Conclusion: And You, What Will You Do With Your 40 Days?

The story did not end at the empty tomb. A new time began, of active waiting, growth in faith, and openness to the Spirit.

The 40 days between the Resurrection and the Ascension are a **personal call**:

- To mature in faith
- To open our eyes to the living presence of Christ
- To live as those who have risen in the midst of a wounded world

Let this Easter Season not pass without leaving a mark. Christ has conquered death. Now it is our turn to **live as those who truly believe that Heaven is open.**