

John Bonner
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 Ascension Sunday

Mary Martin ... Peter Pan ... Wires hold her up ... don't know that as a youngster

What does the Ascension of Our Lord represent in faith history?

Just as his birth, ministry, death, and Resurrection were accomplished in his physical body, so his final departure was visible and tangible... an absence signifying his return to his Father. The physical reality which has been important during all of the post-Resurrection activity remains significant.

Jesus adds the promise that the Father would give them the power he himself had exercised during his earthly ministry. It was the Divine power that would carry the disciples and not their own strength.

Acts gives the greater word on the Ascension. It is a bridge between Luke and Acts and serves as a bridge between the two books and a prelude to the signs and wonders of Pentecost. Jesus appears alive to chosen followers after 40 days of Resurrection. He gives further instructions to the disciples concerning God's Kingdom and told them to wait in Jerusalem for the baptism of the Holy Spirit in a few days. Many questions follow but Jesus tells them that the Father has sole authority over time and events.

Presence and Absence...

There is no sense of absence where there has been no sense of presence. What hurts is the memory of what used to be there but the disciples return from the last physical sighting of Jesus with joy and are in worship. You cannot miss what you have never known, which makes our sense of absence and especially our sense of God's absence the very best proof that we knew God once, and that we may know God again. Jesus does leave us but with a great hope for the future. As we give in to the longing inside then things can happen and change can occur.

It is our sense of God's absence that brings us here seeking presence. Worship was where the disciples were when Luke began and where they went when Jesus Ascended and it is where faith is most authentic still. For us perhaps it is the last place we saw Jesus so it is the first place we will look again.

Joy...

That is what we find here. It is what Jesus left us feeling. That physical leaving lets us believe that there will be a physical return. God did not come and go as a vapor. He came and went as we come and go. We are to be active in His name not those who gaze into heaven with no purpose. The Ascension is not meant to remove us from historical existence. It rather allows us to enter it fully, in the light of our future home with Christ.

Jesus never counted on a large number of people to get the word out. To leave before just a few was God's way. It is just a few of us who believe that will carry the message forward. The Ascension IS the ULTIMATE GIFT...

As we move to the end of the Easter Season what will it be for you? Absence or Presence? Pray often...choose wisely...God has much for us to do in His name.