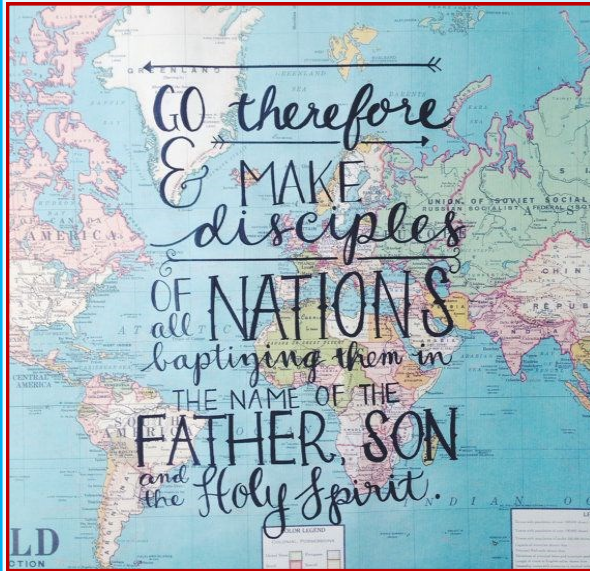


The Ascension

“After the Resurrection”



When Christ said “It is finished.” he did not say “I am finished.” Is there a difference? His physical mission on this earth was finished, but the work of spreading the Word of God was not finished. Both Pentecost and The Ascension vividly tell us the importance of what was going to continue after Christ had ascended into Heaven and The Holy Spirit came to dwell among us forever.

After the resurrection Jesus spent forty days to be seen by the people that he had risen and to give some “last minute advice” like the boss going on a long vacation! He appeared to the women near the tomb, to his disciples and to more than 500 others. This was his time to once again tell his disciples about the kingdom of God. As he spoke to them on that last day they were still questioning. They heard him say he was leaving

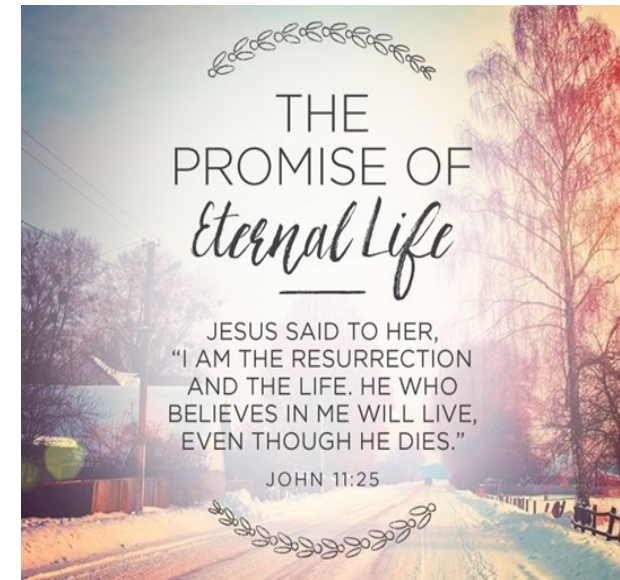
so they asked if he would restore the kingdom to Israel.

They were still confused as to what exactly the mission was. He didn’t really answer their question. Instead he said: *“You don’t get to know the time. Timing is the Father’s business. What you’ll get is the Holy Spirit. And when the Holy Spirit comes on you, you will be able to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, all over Judea and Samaria, even to the ends of the world.”* Acts 1:7-8 The Message

How were they supposed to do this? That was the end of the message. As they watched his feet started to leave the earth and his body started ascending. Then a cloud came down and closed their vision. Two men came down and told them *“You Galileans!—why do you just stand here looking up at an empty sky? This very Jesus who was taken up from among you to heaven will come as certainly—and mysteriously—as he left.”* Act 1:11

Don’t you think they wondered “How soon?” That was it. The rest was done on faith. Again, if Thomas was permitted to doubt, don’t you also think all these people would have doubted what was going to happen next? Was this the beginning of faith?

I think particularly of Peter, James and John. They had been with Christ at the Transfiguration when Christ is transfigured and Elijah and Moses come down from Heaven and stand by him. Then in fear the disciples fell on their faces and Jesus went to them and told them not to be afraid and then Elijah and Moses just disappeared.



Later on in the seventeenth chapter of Matthew we have the beautiful verse when Jesus challenged the faith of the disciples. *“If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.”* It sounds fairly simple. Surely the mustard seed doesn’t challenge or doubt! (The last verse of Matthew 17 tells of miracle we never hear about! Then we also continue in blind faith.)

The Ascension is very important in our faith journey. It is the end of things and a new beginning. It signified the end of God’s human limitation on our earth. God had sent his Son to the earth and now it was time for him to return to Heaven. Jesus had accomplished the work he was sent to do. God had spoken to the three disciples at the Transfiguration and told them. *“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”* Matthew 17:5 It marked His return to Heavenly glory.

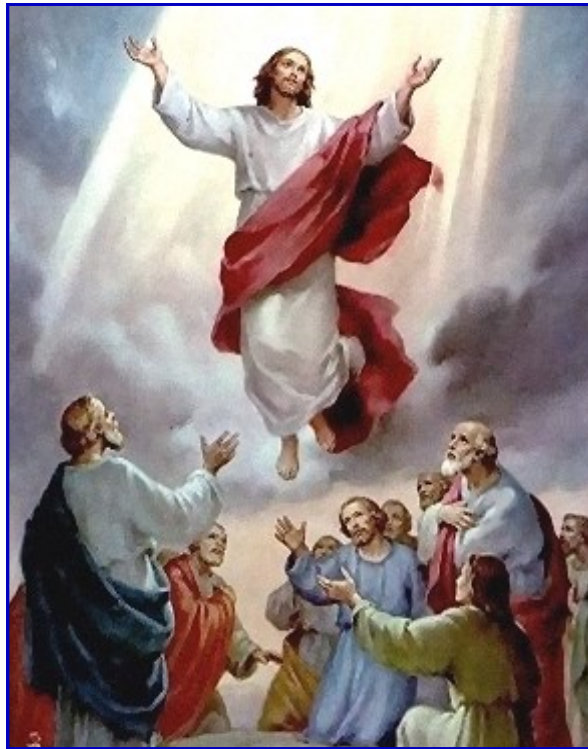
That glory had not been revealed on this earth except to the three disciples at the Transfiguration.

Jesus told his Disciples what would happen to them. *"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."* John 14:2-3

When Thomas questioned, the disciples were told all we need to know today, but without our knowledge of the Trinity today we would find this a very confusing answer. *"Jesus saith unto him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.'"* John 14:6-7

The Ascension tells us that Jesus is in Heaven with His Father, but he will come again in the same manner He left. The time is not known, but He did promise he would come and take us there. We know there is only one way to get to Heaven and it is really fairly simple, or is it. Do we have the faith of the mustard seed?

Before he parted, Jesus gave this great commission to all: *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always,*



to the end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20

The Ascension is not usually celebrated in Christian theology today as it used to be with a banquet and celebration. However it is a very important time in the Christian faith.

Many think of Easter Sunday as a final time of Christ, but the ascension is essential and life-changing for believers. The ascension signifies the end of His earthly ministry and the beginning of our ministry. The emphasis on it is somewhat lessened by the concept that Christ is in Heaven which some picture as a place far away and that He is not dwelling with us today. As Christians we believe He is with us now on this earth, even though we can't understand the concept we have faith that He lives today. Can you imagine being present at the Ascension?

Prayer: Thank You Lord for saving my soul. Thank You Lord for making me whole. Thank You Lord for giving to me, Thy great Salvation, so rich and free. Amen

1. How important should the Ascension be in the life of a Christian?
2. Does He really dwell in each of us?
3. How can He be there and here?
4. Is your God omnipotent?

The Scripture below gives us many unanswered questions. It also gives us wonderful promises and a new appreciation for those who were there and accepted the task of spreading "the Good News" to us.

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"But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they were looking steadfastly into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is nigh unto Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey off." Acts 8-14

This group included the disciples with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.