



Ascension Day —Jesus is Received Back into Heaven

Another celebration follows forty days after Easter, which Christians call “Ascension Day”. It commemorates that Jesus didn’t remain on the earth after his physical resurrection from the grave. Right in front of his disciples, he returned to his father, going directly to heaven. The apostle Luke describes this scene in the 24th chapter of his account of the gospel:

“When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.” (Luke 24:50-51, NIV)



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From that point forward, Jesus is no longer visibly present among humans. He is now together with God the Father in heaven. From there, he will return to the earth at the end of time in a visible human form. Yet since his ascension, Jesus is accessible to every person through prayer.

Jesus has not left his followers on earth alone. He sends them the Holy Spirit, through whom he can be present with every believer. Christians celebrate the coming of and the presence of the Holy Spirit during another festival called “Pentecost”.

Ascension Day: A Forgotten Holiday

Today, many people don’t know what Ascension Day is or how it began. In Germany, it’s still an official holiday. However, many have changed it’s purpose to “Father’s Day”, a day on which some men make outings accompanied by a lot of heavy drinking.

In earlier times, there were various traditions kept on this day, especially among farmers. They especially prayed for a good harvest. On Ascension Day, most of the meals were prepared from some kind of poultry or fowl, such as stuffed dove—or “flying meat”, as it was called. Bread baked in the form of a bird reminded everyone that this day was somehow different.



Christians hold worship services on Ascension Day, quite often outside in public venues. Visitors are always welcome to attend such services, whether they are Christians or not.