

Passport to Glory

Scriptures:

Acts 1:9-11

Luke 24:50-53

John 13-17

2 Kings 2:1-14



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Within the pages of our Bible we find nine instances of human beings who have died, then been resurrected. Can you put yourself in the shoes of the family, the friends of these people? Jairus, the widow of Nain, the Shunemite woman, the widow of Zarephath, they watched in awe as their children were brought back to life by the love and power of God. Mary and Martha had felt abandoned by Jesus because He waited before answering their call for help; they must have been so distraught, then overjoyed as Lazarus appeared alive at the entrance to his tomb.

Yet, one day in the future of all of these who were raised back to life, they would take their final earthly breath and they would die. Death was still inevitable, still the ultimate end for all humanity.

Then there is the one Resurrection that changes everything. For the disciples, the joy, the delight, the relief that their belief that Jesus was indeed the Son of God, must have been overwhelming. Their whole world had been shattered as the battered, bloodied body of their Friend and Teacher was laid, lifeless, in a borrowed tomb. They had locked themselves away in fear that the retribution would fall upon them, only to be stunned by the sight of the empty tomb, of the appearance in their midst of Jesus Himself.

I wonder what, in those first few days, they thought their future would now hold? Did they think that things would just pick up and go on as before? Could their minds grasp what Jesus had told them on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane on that fateful evening? Were they able to understand that this Resurrection was so very different from the ones they had previously witnessed? Had its significance truly sunk into their hearts and minds?

Things would never, ever be the same again. Death had been, once and for all, defeated and had no more power over Christ and all who believed in Him and gave up their lives to be filled with His. On that cruel cross, Christ had won the victory over death for all of humankind.

On Thursday, traditionally, the Ascension of Jesus Christ is celebrated. Forty days after His wonderful Resurrection, Christ is taken up in clouds of glory to be seated at the right hand of His Father. All of this witnessed by His disciples, we aren't told how many but, since there were 120 in the room waiting for the Power of Holy Spirit to come upon them, we can deduce it would have been a significant number. The importance and awe inspiring majesty of this amazing event cannot be under estimated. The need for all followers of Christ to fully understand its huge significance is vital.

When Elijah was taken up to the heavens in a chariot of fire, he, quite literally, passed his mantle to Elisha. Symbolically this ensured Elisha clearly understood that what Elijah had told him would come to pass. So much so,

that he went straight back to the Jordan and struck the waters with the mantle so that they parted, just as they had for Elijah.

When the Living Christ was lifted from this earth and taken up in clouds of glory, He blessed His disciples and gave them the promise that the Power of Holy Spirit would come upon them. In effect, that His Mantle would be passed to them, in the Person of Holy Spirit who would enable them to continue the mission of Christ to save humanity.

And, so wonderfully and so beautifully, that they would not die, they could not die. His Resurrection power would mean that death had no more dominion over any and all who lay down their own lives, and take on Christ's. After His Resurrection, Christ did not again die. After our final breath in this earthly realm, we will not be dead, we are alive forever more.

The Ascension of Jesus Christ is our passport to eternal Glory, our proof of entry to everlasting Life.

Prayer: Abba Father, open our eyes to see Your Glory, to understand what the Ascension means for us. Please give us Your Grace to listen and follow wherever You lead us on our journey so that we can take up Your Mantle, in humility and thankfulness. Through the Power of the Name of Jesus, Amen