

Taken Up In A Cloud



Foundations (Day 302)
by Derek Prince

The New Testament does not give any definite or final answer to this question what became of these saints after the resurrection. However, it seems natural to suppose that these saints, having shared with Jesus in His resurrection, shared with Him also in His ascension into heaven. Let us therefore glance briefly at the description of the ascension of Jesus into heaven.

> "Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight." (Acts 1:9)

We notice that Jesus passed out of His disciples' sight into a cloud and that within this cloud He then continued His ascent to heaven. Immediately after this, two angels appeared to the disciples and gave them the following assurance concerning the return of Christ.

> "This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11)

This indicates that there is to be a close parallel between the ascent of Christ into heaven and His return again from heaven to earth. He will so come in like manner as He was seen to go.

What does this imply? In Mark 13:26 (and in other passages also) it is stated that Christ will come again in the clouds – more literally, in clouds. Again, Zechariah 14:5 and Jude verse 14 reveal that Christ will come with His saints.

Combining these two statements, we find that Christ will come "in clouds, with His saints." We know also that the ascension of Christ into heaven and His return from heaven are closely parallel. We know, further, that Christ ascended into heaven "in a cloud." We are therefore completing the parallel if we suggest that Christ ascended into heaven together with those of his saints who had at that time been resurrected.

There is one further point of interest to notice in this connection.

> "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." (Heb. 12:1)

What is this "cloud of witnesses" to which the writer of Hebrews refers? The context makes it plain that he is referring to the Old Testament saints whose exploits of faith had been recorded in the previous chapter – Hebrews 11. These Old Testament saints are pictured as a cloud of witnesses surrounding each Christian believer who undertakes to run the race of faith in this dispensation. In this way the figure of a cloud is once again linked to the saints of the Old Testament.

From all these considerations it seems both logical and scriptural to suggest that, on the day of His ascension, Jesus was taken up into heaven within a cloud that also contained the Old Testament saints who had been resurrected with Him. In this way the resurrection and ascension of Christ would exactly and completely fulfil all that is indicated in the typology of the Old Testament ordinance of the firstfruits. It would also be exactly parallel to the method of His promised return from heaven to earth.

However, this conclusion should be taken as no more than a logical inference from various indications of Scripture. It should not be put forward dogmatically as an established doctrine.

Devotional

Transcript: WD-B052-302-ENG
Last Updated: 04 Feb 2025
Website: derekprince.com

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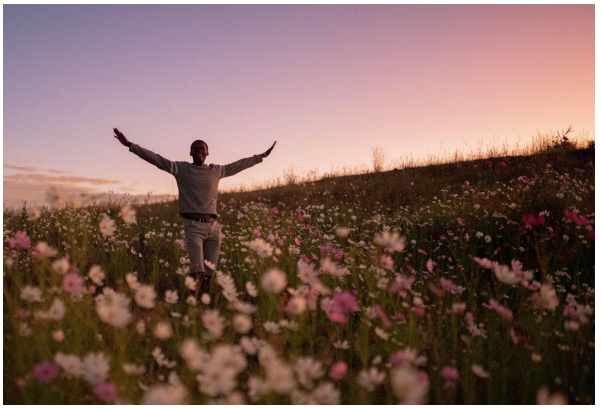

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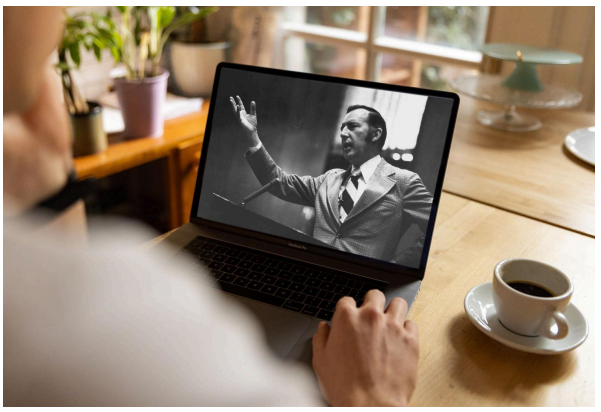

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