

How to Enter the Portals of Heaven

Scripture reveals the start of the ascension life. We are told that after the Resurrection, Jesus spent 40 days ministering on the earth, meeting with family and friends before He ascended to the Father. During this time, He spoke certain things to His disciples before He ascended, letting them know there was more to this life than the fact that He had resurrected, and sin, death and the grave were defeated. He gave a promise of the Holy Spirit to come, and a knowledge and understanding that would now open up to them and to the world as a result of His Resurrection.

In the ascension life, we see God doing work on the earth in His glory, even when we may not be actively involved in it. We may witness a miracle but also have a Sabbath rest as God gets all the glory. He moves in the earth because we have chosen to believe we are ascended with Him, and by this power we take dominion.

Luke says in Acts 1:1-3 (NIV), "In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, He presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God."

The word "ascension" in the Greek is the word *anabaino*, which means "to arise, ascend up, climb, go, grow, rise, spring up and come up." In the ascension life, we move into next levels of living, seated with Christ. We are rising above all things. We are rising into a place of faith where we trust God because of His love for us and all He has already done in the Resurrection.

In the ascension life, we grow up. Yes, we have a foundation in the Resurrection, but now we are learning to rise above all things into the ascension. We are now learning to make a difference on the earth because of where we have risen with Jesus by faith.

In Ephesians 1:18-23 (NIV), the apostle Paul encourages the church toward the ascension life, "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way."

Not only have we overcome sin, death and the grave, which is resurrection power, but we have an eternal seat in ascension power in which we operate by the Holy Spirit in the earth. This ascension power is a place of rest and peace as we subdue nations.

New-Position Blessing

We first read of the ascension when Mary Magdalene and Jesus have a conversation at the tomb after His resurrection. She is crying at the tomb, and He has resurrected and is standing next to her. She doesn't recognize Him, partly because she is overcome with fear. Jesus snaps her out of it by calling her name. Then she comes to her senses. When God calls our name, we finally pay attention, even in the midst of our crisis. We come to our senses and are able to discern truth.

What Jesus says to Mary reveals the difference between the power of the Resurrection and the power of the ascension: "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God'" (John 20:17, NKJV).

Jesus is saying to her, "Don't hold onto Me, as there is more to the story for Me and for you; *I must rise so you can rise. I must go up so you can grow up.* I must take My position in the heavenlies so you can take your position with Me." These are powerful truths for us to understand if we want to see our lives and culture change.

Your ascension power begins with your initial belief in Jesus, which is the beginning of your resurrection life. The apostle Paul shares this phenomenon in Romans 6:3-5: "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."

Your spirit man who was dead is now alive, and Holy Spirit power now lives within you. That has happened inside you, but spiritually you have also been given new position in the heavenlies where every spiritual blessing is yours (Eph. 1:3).

To understand our power in the ascension, we must learn about realms of the earth as well as soulish and spirit realms. Jesus told Mary, "Don't hold onto Me" because she had to know the "more" to the story. It would not have been good for her to know only the resurrected Jesus because she would have been fighting fear throughout the rest of her life—fear He had already conquered. She had to know the ascended Jesus so she would enter His rest and stop trying to overcome in every situation.

Next-Level Living

God is getting ready to take His church to the next level in these last days. While many believers know about the resurrected life, few know about the biblical concept of the ascension life. Jesus completed the Resurrection, and then He ascended to the Father. Each of these miracles—the one of Resurrection and the one of ascension—represent different revelations of our position and power in Christ. Believers must learn to move beyond the resurrected life and start living the ascension life.

The resurrection life is the overcoming and victorious life that Jesus bought with His shed blood on the cross for His followers. He died, was buried and resurrected so we might live it. The resurrection life should be the normal Christian life.

When Jesus resurrected, He defeated sin, death and the grave. He enabled us to be saved so we could live here on earth as overcomers of evil. The power of the Resurrection means the enemy has been defeated, and God now calls us to live grace-filled lives.

This resurrected life is amazing, but there is more to the story. We are not just overcomers and victorious over evil, but we are called to be seated with Christ in heavenly places.

This level of position enables us to have the power to be change agents on the earth. God calls us to live, move and breathe from a new position that reflects the truth that Jesus ascended to heaven, remains there now and says we are with Him as well when we believe. For this faith to take action, we must see ourselves and our world through the eyes of the power of the ascension of Jesus.

Spirit-Powered Understanding

Are you ever tired of merely overcoming fear, anxiety,

depression and loss? Do you want instead to find a place of rest in the midst of your trials? That is the ascension life.

Mary had to discover Jesus as “My Father ... and My God” (John 20:17b) for the personal relationship to become so deep that fear, anxiety and depression would forever be gone—and evil, demonic forebodings with it. She would then ascend to the place where she could confidently rule with Jesus on the mountain, and He would minister what was needed on the earth to her and through her.

She could have all this even while her body, spirit and soul were on the earth, and her mind remained in a place of daily rest and peace with Him. Holy Spirit power, faith and an understanding of ascension make all this possible for us.

Mary was looking to cling to Jesus too soon and He said no. He knew the best was yet to come, and it involved the Spirit of the Lord being released in the earth and also into her. She could then reach the next level of knowing Him, far beyond fighting the good fight with resurrection power alone. She would enter a place of rest, as the author of Hebrews 4:8-11 (NIV) says, “For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.”

The power of the ascension is the next level of rest and peace. It doesn’t mean you won’t have to fight the good fight of faith or undertake a battle; it just means your weapons of warfare are not carnal, but they pull down strongholds (2 Cor. 10:4). It means you fight in the heavenlies from a seat of rest by faith and peace, knowing God as “my Father and my God,” certain of His love, unafraid to trust Him.

This is a place of knowing He can and will release what we need in the time we need it, and here we must rest. If you are hungry and thirsty for this type of understanding, just ask Him to give you revelation. He will give to His beloved child.

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