



After His Passion

Ac 1:1-3

1:1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

*3 To whom also he shewed himself **alive after his passion** by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:*

The word “passion” is used only this one time in the entire Bible. It sums up Jesus’ being despised and rejected by his own countrymen - those unto whom he had come to save from their sins.

Sins, iniquities, transgressions, wickedness, evil thoughts and imaginations: wrong doings such as theft, murder, adultery, fornication, lying, covetousness, hatred, jealousy, deceitfulness and drunkenness – these all, and many other things since the time of Adam & Eve’s disobedience had filled the cup of man’s iniquity to the brim, incurring the wrath of a righteous, holy God, precipitating his coming into the world in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, to condemn sin in the flesh and redeem us from all iniquity.

ENTER THE PASSION OF CHRIST.

PASSION, what is it all about?

- **It entails Gethsemane, where he made the decision to drink the bitter cup of the wrath of God that had been filled to the brim. It means he poured out his soul unto death in prayer, sweating, as it were, great drops of blood.**
- **His passion speaks of being bitter betrayed by a close friend and chosen apostle, and being sold for a paltry 30 pieces of silver, the price of a slave.**
- **His passion involved the many afflictions he endured, as well as all the evil he underwent at the hands of wicked men, such as the false accusers at his trial, the blood-thirsty mob who loudly demanded his crucifixion, those who stripped off his garment, bound him to a post and flogged him with cat-a-nine tails to within an inch of death, the men who blindfolded him, jerked out his facial hairs, spit upon him, mocked him, struck him repeatedly with their hands, and pressed a crown of thorns upon his brow.**
- **The passion of Christ speaks of his painful, agonizing climb to the brow of Golgotha’s hill, carrying his cross. His passion tells of his being nailed to the cross by having iron spikes driven through his hands and feet.**
- **That two-syllable word takes in his thirst, the jeers and taunts ringing in his ears, the sight of his mother standing by & looking upon him helplessly, the shame of nakedness, the horror of darkness that hung over the city for 3 hours at midday, the circling of vultures over his head, the baying of dogs around his feet, soldiers drawing lots for his blood-stained garment, his fervent prayer: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,” his three all-conclusive words: “It is finished,” and then, “Into thy hands I commend my spirit,” before he hung his head and died.**
- **His passion means also a sword ripping through his side, opening a wound from which gushed blood and water.**

· **His mutilated, torn and ravaged body, with his face marred beyond recognition, was tenderly removed from the cross, wrapped with grave clothes, placed in a borrowed tomb, and sealed fast within by a huge stone, sealing wax, and his burial place was guarded round the clock, 24/7 by 16 armed men who remained on duty 4 men at a time, 4 hours each shift.**

The story of "his passion" is the story of the purpose of his life. It is the supreme and culminating point - the one indispensable feature of his whole career; that to which everything led up, for which everything prepared, compared with which everything else was unimportant. Never, at any period of his ministry, did the Son of God so truly and so largely fulfill the mission on which he came, as when he was "putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself," as when he was betrayed and smitten and reviled, as when he was "lifted up" on the cross and "poured out his soul unto death." But all of that would have been of no account, meaningless, and in vain, had he not risen from the dead. We would be yet in our sins, with no hope beyond the grave.

Thanks be to God, the passion of the Christ did not end on a dead note! Listen to the inspired words recorded in Matthew 28:

28:1 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

Jesus showed himself alive after his passion!

The week immediately preceding the festival of Easter is sometimes called "Passion Week" in commemoration of the final five days of Jesus' life on earth. Rather than refer to today as Easter Sunday, I prefer to call it Resurrection Day. Why? Because he showed himself **alive** after his passion.

For those who desire to believe in the resurrection of Christ, but who also do not want to be deceived, our Lord provided "many infallible proofs."

Henry Morris has written, "The term 'infallible proofs' is one word in the Greek (tekmerion) and occurs only this one time." It means literally "many criteria of certainty." It is significant that the inspired Word of God applies it only to the resurrection of Christ.

Morris has further noted that this term "emphasizes that the evidences for Christ's resurrection were not philosophical speculations but certain facts. No other event of biblical history has been confirmed more certainly than His bodily resurrection."

Jesus hammered many nails of "Irrefutable Evidence" around the doorway of His tomb upon which believers of all ages could hang their hats of faith and hope. Some of these proofs are...

- **The Sealed Tomb.** In order to seal a tomb it was necessary to tie one end of a rope to the side of the sepulcher and pass it across the stone and tie it to the other side. It was drawn tight so that there would be no way to remove the stone without breaking the seal. Then wax or clay was placed on each end and in the center so that if the rope or stone were disturbed, the seal would break.

- **The Empty Tomb.** The empty tomb has never been explained except by the bodily resurrection. If the body were still there or any other place accessible to Jews or Romans, they would certainly have produced it as a sure means of immediately quenching the spreading flame of Christianity.

As G. B. Hardy has said, "Here is the complete record. Confucius' tomb... occupied; Buddhas' tomb... occupied; Mohammed's tomb... occupied; Jesus' tomb... EMPTY."

HOW, OR IN WHAT FORM, DID JESUS "SHOW HIMSELF ALIVE AFTER HIS PASSION"?

There was evidently some change in His body and some difference in His manner of appearing. Yes, he ate with His disciples, but not as one who needed food; he seems to have eaten only to convince them of His physical existence. He does not seem to have lived with them on a close and familiar basis as He had before, but came to them occasionally; and the forms of his appearances suggest something miraculous. On one occasion he walked alongside two disciples and they did not know who he was, because "their eyes were holden." Later, he revealed himself as they broke bread together and then "he vanished out of their sight." On another occasion, he entered a room when "the doors were bolted."

The disciples regarded Jesus with a deeper reverence after his passion than had been their custom in his former state.

- Eyewitnesses. *"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins . . . and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present"* (I Cor 15:3-6). The Epiphanies [appearances] of the forty days were to those who had already believed on him but now needed to have their hopes recharged and anchored by the certainty of his resurrection. And so he appeared unto many. The remarkable parade of eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ is part of the overwhelming body of evidence making this a most certain fact of biblical history.

The gospel accounts mention numerous people to whom "he shewed himself alive after his passion".

1. To Mary Magdalene (Mk 16; Jn 20.)
2. To the women who had first visited the sepulchre, by whom the disciples were summoned to meet Christ in Galilee (Mt 28:1-10).

Simon Peter and John were each convinced of Jesus' resurrection at separate points and in response to different exhibits of evidence.

The Bible testifies that, after the women told Peter and John about the awesome things they had witnessed at the empty tomb, the two men ran there to see for themselves. While John's feet were still on the tomb's floor, before he stepped back outside the sepulcher, he became a thorough believer. The Scripture says, "he saw and believed". What was the evidence that convinced John? It was the linen clothes lying on the tomb's floor. To understand what a powerful exhibit of evidence this was, one must understand something of the Jewish burial customs of that era. The writer, E.W. Kenyon, has provided an excellent commentary here:

"You understand that in every family among the wealthy Jews, there was a slave who understood embalming, for that class always embalmed their loved ones. John 19:39-40: 'And there came also Nicodemus, he who at the first came to him by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. So they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as was the custom of the Jews to bury.'

The body was first washed, and then the cloth was torn up into narrow strips and smeared with the sticky substance. Each finger and toe and hand and foot was wrapped with these strips until the legs and arms and body were completely encased in this sticky substance. The head and neck were completely covered except the face. When it was finished, over the chest and torso there was an inch to an inch and a half of this cloth covered with that sticky substance. The body was then put into Joseph's tomb. The climate was about the same as they have in Southern California. In a few hours the embalming garment would become a solid mass, and Jesus' body would be completely imprisoned in the grave clothes. The face was yet to be embalmed. Loved ones laid a napkin upon his face, heavily saturated with something to preserve the face until the third day when loving hands would finish the embalming."

Peter and John were both intrigued by the grave clothes lying on the floor of the tomb. They each stooped down to look at them. For John, that was all he needed to see, in order to believe. E.W. Kenyon again gives us an insight as to what John saw.

"What did John see? He saw the empty cocoon lying there upon the floor. It had become so hard and stiff that it would almost support one's knee as you pressed upon it. But it was empty. The body of Jesus had come out of that little narrow aperture at the face. If John had seen that someone with a knife had ripped that cocoon open and taken the body of Jesus, he would never have believed; the empty cocoon convinced John that Jesus was risen from the dead." It was one of many "infallible proofs."

3. Jesus later appeared to Peter (Lk 24:33-35; 1 Co 15:5).

4. He showed himself to Cleophas and another on the way to Emmaus (Mk 16:12; Lk 24:13-32).

5. He appeared to the eleven in the absence of Thomas, at Jerusalem (Lk 24:36-43; Jn 20:19-25).

6. He came "eight days afterwards" and again showed himself alive to the disciples when Thomas was with them (Mk 16:14; Jn 20:26-29; 1 Co 15:6). For Thomas, visual proof was not enough. He required more evidence. He declared, "*Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.*" Jesus offered to Thomas the "infallible proof" he needed

7. He showed himself to certain of the disciples when they were fishing on the lake of Galilee (Jn 21:1-24).

8. He appeared to James (1 Co 15:7).

9. The risen Lord appeared to Paul, "as one born out of due time."

10. He revealed himself to the apostles, and probably the whole body of disciples on a certain mountain in Galilee (1 Co 15:6).

11. Finally, he appeared on the morning of his ascension into heaven (Lk 24:43-51).

- Another Infallible Proof of His Resurrection is the Transformed Lives of His Followers - Seven weeks after the resurrection, the apostles, who had locked themselves fearfully in an upper room after his crucifixion, became articulate and powerful evangelists. They willingly suffered much opposition, persecution and even death. This fact substantiates the veracity of their message beyond all doubt. Of the twelve apostles listed in Acts 1:13, 26, only John died a natural death; history tells us the rest were martyred. The despondent disciples would not have suffered and died for a dead Christ. They were so confident in the message of the risen Christ that they carried it to the ends of the Roman world before the end of the first century and changed the world forever.

The change that took place in about 120 believers on the day of Pentecost was so amazing that it confounded the gathered multitude, who cried out, "*What meaneth this?*"

Ac 4:33 declares:

And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

- Present Day Personal Experiences. We who have enjoyed the reality of the new birth and Spirit-filled life are never at the mercy of the skeptics' arguments. We have "tasted of the heavenly gift" and been "made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come" (Heb 6:4-5). We know it's real!

Just as surely as Jesus was raised from the dead, we are also raised. Once dead in trespasses and sins, we have been quickened [made alive] by Christ through the infilling of his holy Spirit. Likewise, "*We are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection*" (Rom 6:4-5).

The reality of the awesome change Jesus Christ has made in our lives proves conclusively to us the truth of His resurrection. "*If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*" (II Cor 5:17).

Neither Christ's passion, nor the succeeding events, were merely incidental or without prior knowledge, as the

scriptures bear out. Peter spoke of them in this fashion as he brought our great salvation to the forefront:

1Pe 1:10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace [*that should come*] unto you:

1Pe 1:11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings [**passion**] of Christ, **and the glory that should follow** [after his passion].

The Spirit of Christ testified hundreds of years beforehand of the passion of the Christ. They saw it long before it ever happened. Prophets such as Moses, Isaiah, Daniel, David and Zechariah saw clearly that the Messiah was to suffer and die.

They also foretold “**the glory that should follow**”. - That is, they saw that there would be glory, which would be the result of his sufferings, but they did not clearly see what it would be. They had some knowledge that he would be raised from the dead; they knew that he would “*see of the travail of his soul, and would be satisfied;*” they had some glimpses of the effects of the gospel on the nations of the earth, but there were many things respecting his sufferings and glorification which they did not clearly understand.

Peter preached powerfully concerning the passion of Jesus Christ and his ensuing glory in these words:

Ac 2:22-33

22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

*23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, **ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:***

*24 **Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death:** because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.*

25 For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:

27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

29 Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

*30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, **he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;***

*31 **He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.***

*32 **This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.***

*33 **Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.***

THE PASSION GAVE RISE TO THE RESURRECTION, WHICH LED UP TO THE ASCENSION WHEREBY JESUS WAS GLORIFIED, AND IT CULMINATED IN THE OUTPOURING OF HIS SPIRIT UPON EXPECTANT WORSHIPPERS.

Paul exhorted believers with these words:

Php 2:5-11

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, **even the death of the cross** [his passion].

9 Wherefore God also hath **highly exalted him** [after his passion], and given him a name which is **above every name**:

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The same apostle testified personally in the very next chapter:

Php 3:7-11

7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

10 That I may know him, and **the power of his resurrection** [that which followed **after** his passion], **and the fellowship of his sufferings** [passion], being made conformable unto his death;

11 If by any means **I** might attain unto the resurrection of the dead [after **my** passion].

NO CROSS – NO CROWN. NO SUFFERING – NO GLORY. NO DEATH – NO LIFE. NO PASSION – NO PENTECOST. NO WEeping – NO JOY. NO SORROW – NO REJOICING. NO TRIBULATION – NO ENTERING INTO THE KINGDOM.

John put it this way:

Rv 1:9-18

9 I John, who also am your brother, and **companion in tribulation**, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Another of the infallible proofs of Jesus' resurrection is noted in the writings of Matthew, chapter 27. It speaks of a momentous happening shortly after Christ arose.

50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

After his passion, Christ Jesus took full authority over hell and death! He is Lord! He has received a kingdom, where he reigns forever in glorious power.

Eugene Peterson wrote in his contemporary language version, *The Message*, "*But the truth is that Christ has been raised up, the first in a long legacy of those who are going to leave the cemeteries.*"

TODAY, THE RISEN CHRIST OFFERS YOU AN ABUNDANT ENTRANCE INTO HIS GLORIOUS KINGDOM. THE WAY IS SIMPLE: HUMBLE YOURSELVES AND BECOME AS A LITTLE CHILD, ONE WHO IS SUBMISSIVE, BELIEVING, AND OBEDIENT TO THE WORD OF HIS FATHER.

THE BLOOD OF HIS PASSION STILL SPEAKS IN THIS HOUR, SAYING, "*Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.*" It says, "*Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*"

He calls you today to believe on him and experience the marvelous relief of forgiveness as you repent of your sins. He invites you to be born again of water by baptism in the name of Jesus, and to be born again of his Spirit. The kingdom of God awaits. I urge you not to delay your entrance. Step out from your pew and come to this altar where we can all pray for one another.