

Experiencing Easter

By PAUL J. SCHARF

What a tumultuous week it had been for Jesus' disciples. Talk about going through a whirlwind! By Sunday evening, they were practically—almost literally—driven out of their minds.

Each of these men had spent—wasted?—three years in the school of Christ.

But now, suddenly, it was over. This was the end—and now it was time to return to the mundane tasks that had been all but forgotten over the course of the previous years.

But they did not realize that, for each of them, life—real life—was actually just about to begin.

Unexpectedly, Jesus appeared to them—walking into a room with closed *doors* (see John 20:19, 26). Amazing things were about to happen!

They were about to *experience Easter* for themselves.

Jesus' resurrection body had astounding capabilities.

First of all, we must recognize that He was not “a spirit” (Luke 24:37, 39). Jesus was still in a physical body—although now resurrected and glorified.

It appears to me, though, that the characteristics that He displayed here “during forty days” (Acts 1:3) that He spent upon the Earth following His resurrection were not related to His exercise of Divine attributes, and they certainly did not manifest the fullness of His *glory* as the Son of God (see John 17:5). When He revealed Himself to the Apostle John in that exalted state, His appearance was far different (see Rev. 1:10-20).

But, in Jesus' post-resurrection ministry, His body exhibited much similarity to the way He was before He died (see Matt. 28:9-10; Luke 24:40; John 20:17, 27). In fact, He could be mistaken for a non-glorified person (see Luke 24:15-16; John 20:15-16; 21:4). He was even free to eat, as He did on several occasions—appearing to wholly enjoy the experience (see Luke 24:30, 41-43; John 21:9-13).

The body of Jesus, as it is described in these passages, seems to be the prototype for the glorified or *resurrection body* that all believers in Him will receive one day (1 Cor. 15:42-49).

The Apostle Paul explains that we “will appear with Him in glory” (Col. 3:4). How will we even be able to function in such a resplendent environment? We could not, except for the fact that first “we shall be like Him”—the only reason that we will have the capacity to “see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2).

This transformation will take place at the rapture, when “we shall all be changed” (1 Cor. 15:51). Some will first need a resurrection from death, while those believers who have not yet died by that time will simply be *glorified* (Rom. 8:29-30). All of this will take place in an immeasurably short amount of time, as Christ seizes His church from Earth up to heaven (1 Cor. 15:50-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Life is often hard for many of Jesus’ disciples—even tumultuous at times. Talk about going through some whirlwinds! As we journey through this world, sometimes we feel practically—almost literally—driven out of our minds.

We look back and see how we have spent—wasted?—many years that we might have devoted more fully to the work of Christ.

And then, suddenly, it is over. The end arrives abruptly—and we might even wish that we could return and perform more of those mundane tasks that had defined our lives over the course of the previous years.

But we must realize that, when this life ends, real life—eternal life in heaven with God—is actually just about to begin.

Unexpectedly, Jesus will appear to us—walking us into a room that He has *prepared* just for us (see John 14:1-3). Amazing things are about to happen!

Whether through resurrection or simply rapture, each of us who believes on Him will, one day relatively soon, be allowed to *experience Easter* for ourselves.

And, so we pray, “O Lord, come!” (1 Cor. 16:22).

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