

The Mystery of the Cloud of Witnesses

When a Christian dies, are they involved anymore on the Earth? What are they doing in Heaven? Should we be happy for them as well as grieve about our loss? Are they in heavenly bliss? Do they watch us?

Hebrews 12:1 says that we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. What does that mean? We will find that those that have gone before are actually interceding that we will come into our fullness.

Who are the people in the Cloud of Witnesses? Elijah and Moses are certainly there. (Mark 9:2-4) We know that Moses died, but Elijah never did.

How did they come from Heaven to the Earth?

- Some theologians think that there was a heavenly overlap where Jesus actually overlapped Heaven.
- Some people feel that they actually came in physical form to the Earth.
- Both of them had promises in God that Jesus was fulfilling.

How much more would we who intercede on the earth now, do so much more when we see Jesus, face to face?

John saw the Great Cloud of Witnesses worshipping Jesus. They were seeing what God wanted to get the fullness of Jesus' reward activated. It culminates in Revelation 19 where we see the bride of Christ crying out with the heavenly host and the eldership for Jesus. They are not inactive—they are very focused on Jesus and His reward.

- The Spirit of Prophecy—the Testimony of Jesus—is crying out for what He longs for, His bride.

The Church is focused on the counterfeit at times rather than the reality that we're surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses.

- Because of some of the unbalances of such things as Spiritism, people began to look to their dead relatives; mediators, instead of Jesus. That was never God's intention.
- But then what about when God does allow us to catch a peek of a person from heaven?
- Paul saw wonderful things in Heaven that he couldn't even repeat. What would be so wonderful?

- One of those things that he saw was that those who had gone to be with Jesus were in their fullness. That we would be one in Jesus as He was in the Father.

How much more will the ones who loved you on earth be able to represent you before God now that they are in Heaven and really know you?

- There they see you in God's value for you.
- They're called to represent you in the courtrooms of Heaven and the love of God.
- They haven't stopped.
- Because they're there and you are part of their inheritance that they left undone, that you're living out a calling that affects theirs and Jesus' inheritance in Heaven.
- Our mourning process should be different for them than those who aren't saved, because we're going to know them forever.

What do we do when we realize that our loved ones in Heaven are working with us right now?

There is a reality going on right now in Heaven of those who have gone on before us. Your greatest investment is your family. Do you think if you were in Heaven right now you would forget about them? Would you be curious about them? Would you be so caught up in everything around you that you wouldn't even think about them?

- No, because God gives you stewardship over your family, your friends, your destiny, your prophetic words while you're here.
- But there, it's only amplified because when you come into Heaven, you come into a Heavenly mindset.
- You understand His heart and His mind because you're near to Him.

Shawn had a vision of a little boy that was running in Heaven. He called out a couple in the meeting, and the little boy was the son of their cousin. The child, whose name was Dash, had died of a degenerative disease, and Shawn even told them his name and the parent's name—which was Runner.

- Shawn was seeing not a dead person, but a real living person—in his eternal scenario.
- He was seeing Runner interact with Jesus.
- Runner cared deeply for his family on earth, that at one point he grabbed the hand of his grandmother who was also in Heaven and they were praying with Jesus over the whole family.
- Because they have enlightenment, their prayers are not like how we pray on earth.

"These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect."

- Those who have gone before us are helping to keep us before Jesus heart.

Shawn was at Pastor Bill Johnson's church called Bethel in California, when he was caught up in a visionary experience. In it he saw a prophetic man named Bob Jones who had passed on just a few years ago. Bob was talking to another man named Melvin and they were talking about a street address. Bob was saying that the address was a prophetic parallel to his family's inheritance in the future. The man ended up being Bill Johnson's father.

There are many more connections like this being made.

- It is so important to the foundation of our faith that we honor those generations that went before us.
- From the early Church until now there are those who paid such a big price and they didn't get to see what was promised, but through our generations and future generations, as we partner with them, we will see Jesus' reward.
- We need to think about the cloud of witnesses as our advocates.
- People that you know are looking at your life because you're part of their inheritance and you're what makes your inheritance full in Heaven so that you can give Jesus the biggest reward possible.

Hebrews 11:39-40 "These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect."

- This is part of the mystery of the cloud of witnesses.
- Hebrews 12:1 talks about the cloud of witnesses—the word witness is very much like the witness in a trial—they bear and bring testimony before God.
- This means that there is an interaction that is going on right now. They're bearing testimony of everything that belongs to them before God that God's given them to do for God. If they have something undone left on the earth, that means that they have a story to tell Heaven. They have something to testify before Heaven for.
- You might be what's left on the earth for them. It might be your life, your calling or destiny.

God is saying to you right now that your relatives are part of the eternal scenario of His heart.

This is biblical, and now you have heard Shawn's stories to prove it. This is so beautiful because instead of worrying about necromancy or spiritism—we're worried about those who are alive in Christ Jesus right now, that are more alive and more aware than even we are.

- We can now be empowered to understand that there are testifiers that have gone on before us.
- This can bring a comfort to you, and maybe even lift the mourning that some have been carrying over the loss of a loved one. They are still very much alive and still love and care for you, and are still praying for you and praying with Jesus for you.

As of today, be encouraged and start to change the way you think about death. We're not only alive forever, but we are also invested in God's eternal scenario, and even the natural scenario on the earth. What if your relatives really are watching you like we watch reality TV?