

Current Affairs #82 – The Rapture, Part 2

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This is my second installment, one of two, on the doctrine of the rapture. It is important that you listen to both, for I am deconstructing the false doctrine of the rapture. What I want to do is to begin with this reading, which is a recapitulation of what I ended the last session with, and upon rereading it, what I intend to do is simply point out the highlights of what I have already pointed out by way of setting up, delving into 1 Corinthians 15. So, I am going to read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13 NKJV).

So the premise, there is going to be a resurrection of those who have already died in Christ. What is the basis on which we assert that fact? Well, Jesus died and was raised again. That is a fact, and we know it. Again, this is part two, so I am not going to rehearse everything I said in the first part.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him [at the return of the Lord] those who sleep in Jesus.

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord [In other words, this is not some thought up doctrine on my (Paul's) part], that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep (1 Thessalonians 4:14-15).

In other words, being caught up to be with the Lord will not occur for those who are alive and remain at the coming of the Lord until those who have died in Christ have been raised. Alright? Both being taken up occurs, when? At the time of the return of the Lord. For, look, He is already descending. This is no seven year wait in heaven. That is garbage theology.

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

- “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout”— So, He is descending. It means He is no longer in heaven; He is already on His way here. And lest you think He is going to take seven years to get here, we are going to be caught up to meet Him in the clouds, physical clouds, just like when He was taken up. Acts 1 refers to it: a cloud received Him out of their sight.¹ So, it is at the level of the clouds.
- “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel”— So, an archangel will shout. This is about the coming of the King. A page, an announcer, proclaiming a “Hear ye, Hear ye” kind of announcement will be the sound of the voice of an archangel. We have seen these archangels who, at the sound of their voices, foundations of things are shaken. There is no issue as to the amplification of their voice.
- “...with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God”—An archangel announces as a page and a trumpet blasts to arrest everybody.
- “And the dead in Christ will rise first.”— If this were a live audience, I would say, “Say after me, ‘And the dead in Christ will rise first.’” Because that is the point. Those who have already fallen asleep in Christ will arise before those who are alive and remain are caught up.

Now 1 Corinthians 15 will tell us something more about how they are caught up. It tells us that they will be changed in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, and he tells us that within the context of talking about different forms of bodies. We have a natural body now; we will be raised with an incorruptible body, if you are those who have fallen asleep in Christ. And those who are alive and remain will be transformed, in the shortest increment of time, from their present physical form to the same form of their brethren who died and who are now being resurrected in a celestial form.

Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up [in that form] together with them [who have died] in the clouds [Jesus is not a slow train coming. It is not a seven-year work in progress. In the clouds—He will have descended to the clouds by that day.] to meet the

All Scripture quotations are from the NKJV Bible, unless otherwise noted.

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

Lord in the air [the clouds are in the air] (1 Thessalonians 4:17a, comments added in brackets).

I mean, how on earth could you read this Scripture and talk about anything like a pre-tribulation/mid-tribulation rapture? This is when the Lord is coming back. That is after all the shaking. Everything that precedes the coming of the Lord has happened. And part of what I am laboring to show you is how we, the saints, are not huddled in some corner somewhere trying to survive. We are fully clothed with the authority of heaven. And our goal is not survival in these times, just before the coming of the Lord. Our goal is to put on display the full range of the glory of God, the glory of His character, the glory of His name, all of that, in the midst of the fully matured effort of Satan to keep us from reflecting the glory of God. To take us out before then, you see, is an admission of defeat. We have no purpose except to survive.

That is why I am unrestrained in my criticism of those who say that you will be raptured out before these things happen. Their negligence to prepare you borders on being criminal. It is, at a minimum, a dereliction of duty. If you think that the end of the age is about just saying, “Give me your hand, give God your heart,” as has been popularized by television evangelists, “and join the church of your choice,” and that is it, then of course you want an escape option. But if you are understanding you are born again—and that does not mean so you can go to heaven when you die, although it includes that—but you are born into sonship. Is not a natural child born into a family? But, being born as a child, you are not supposed to remain as a child. But the doctrine of these folks would be, “Well, you are born as a child, and you will remain as a child sixty years, seventy years later, and get raptured out just in case that is the time when the Lord is coming back.” What utter, mind-numbing folly. The purveyors of these things need to at least open the Bible again and stop being parrots, mouthing the language of misinformed theologians, people who are not even concerned, actually, because they are dispensationalists, in that they think about the Scriptures in terms of epochs.

A dispensation is not an epoch. A dispensation is what it says it is: the giving out; to dispense. It is how God dispenses grace, and the grace is the economy of His House. God dispenses the *oikos*² *nomos*,³ the *oikonomia*,⁴ from which we get the English term “economy”—the economy of His House. He has reserved that economy of His House that is the mature saint for the end of the age. It is not this foolish Baptist doctrine about dispensationalism. It is not a time epoch. It is about the giving out of an order of His House, the *oikos nomos*—the *nomos* or the order of His House.

So, He will give out the order of the mature saint at the end of the age because it is the perfect foil. It is that which overcomes everything the enemy does, and at the same time puts on display the glory of God, which is what God created man for: a man in the image and likeness of His Father;⁵ a man who is the glory of God’s representation in the earth.⁶ If the age concludes without that showing, then God in fact does not have a man made in His image and likeness who is for the purpose of being the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His person on the earth; and the experiment has failed. But there is no chance it will.

The rapture is a foolish doctrine based upon a grotesque misreading of Scripture, and intentional I would say. You cannot read this with half a brain and conclude that you are somehow going to be raptured out of here seven years before these things. In fact, you cannot read the New Testament without understanding that the saints are in the midst of what is going on, because that is where they display the glory of God.

Listen, if you are under the rule or teaching of preachers who are teaching this folly, get out. The danger to you is, they are not preparing you, and the times have come of critical importance. You do not owe loyalty to these systems that have you waiting for an exit. Their dereliction is imperiling you. If you choose to be subject to it and you have heard this message, then you are no longer

² See *oikos*, Strong’s Greek 3624 - <https://biblehub.com/str/greek/3624.htm>

³ See *nomos*, Strong’s Greek 3551 - <https://biblehub.com/str/greek/3551.htm>

⁴ See *oikonomia*, Strong’s Greek 3622 - <https://biblehub.com/str/greek/3622.htm>

⁵ See Genesis 1:26a: “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness,’ ”

⁶ See Hebrews 1:3a NIV: “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.”

innocent. And do not go to these fellows and tell them to listen to this. They will not. Do not be disappointed if you try it, and they come up with a reading that somehow tries to explain away the plain meaning of Scripture. They cannot. It does not make one bit of sense because of what this passage is saying, but they will try. And because it is familiar to your ears, you will likely be deceived by it.

But I am asking you, read the Scriptures now having heard what I have said, and see if there is any possible way you could wrangle out of these Scriptures, you going to heaven seven years or three-and-a-half years before Jesus comes back. They are simply playing on your fear. But I am saying to you that, as mature sons of God, this is your moment to shine—individually and corporately—and God prepared it to be so. Perhaps God will be gracious if you choose not to believe, to take you out before the times come, because you would have no chance of surviving, let alone putting on display the glory of God.

Listen, it is a time for blunt talk. I am not playing games. For the longest while, preachers have coached each other into silence by saying such foolish things as you cannot disagree with things they say because they are the man of God. You are the man of God when you are speaking for God, not when you are speaking the foolish doctrines that fail to prepare the people of God; then you are speaking for yourself.

Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

This is not about being with the Lord in heaven; it is about being with the Lord. Now where will the Lord be? Why is He even coming back? He does not need to come back to gather us up, you know. He could just take us up to heaven. He does not need to come back to gather us and do a return trip to heaven, taking us with Him. No. He did that once, and that is in Ephesians, the 4th chapter. That is when He led captives in His train, when He was leading them to heaven.⁷ That is

⁷ See Ephesians 4:8-9: “Therefore He says: ‘When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men.’ (Now this, “He ascended” —what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?”

after He was resurrected from the dead, and He took the righteous dead with Him to heaven, and that is where they are now. And indeed, the souls of all those who have died in Christ, together with their spirits, are in heaven.

Why not simply add to the number, those who are alive and remain? Have them come up and close up heaven, close up shop. We are done. Why do You come back? Because there is the matter of ruling with a rod of iron.⁸ There is the matter of the millennium.⁹ There is the matter of finishing the rule that was cut off before He could finish it. He will rule for a day; and the earth will know the peace and the good order of His presence for a day, which is a thousand years.¹⁰ So He comes back to the earth, and He brings us with Him.

In fact, I do not know how a person could read the Book of Revelation—about the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven as a bride adorned for her husband,¹¹ and statements such as “the first heaven and the first earth passed away”¹²—I do not know how we could read these things and conclude that heaven is eternal. We are going there, and it will be eternal; it will be what it is from now on. No. There will be a new heaven and a new earth. All of what is in heaven will be emptied out, including the great white throne of God’s judgment, and it will come upon a renewed earth for purposes yet to be fulfilled.

Heaven is not the final destination, and you should have known that. Why? Because heaven is a created place. It is not eternal. It was created. Or have you forgotten or it did not register with you that in the Book of Genesis, chapter 1, verse 1, it tells us heaven was created?¹³ It was created at the same time, or within the same epoch, within the same transaction that brought the earth into

⁸ See Psalm 2:9; Revelation 2:27; 12:5; 19:15a

⁹ See Revelation 20:1-6

¹⁰ See 2 Peter 3:8: “But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”

¹¹ See Revelation 21:2: “Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

¹² See Revelation 21:1: “Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.”

¹³ See Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

being. Did he not say, “In the beginning God created the heavens (plural) and the earth”? You do not have any difficulty concluding that the earth, being created, would be dissolved, but you prefer to retain the fact that a created thing exists forever.¹⁴ There is no such thing. Anything that has a beginning, has an end. The heavens had a beginning. There was a time when they were not. And so, having begun, they are destined to being rolled up as a scroll.¹⁵ We look for new heavens and a new earth. So, this whole emphasis on escapism is soundly unbiblical and runs counter to everything the Scriptures say.

Let me show you more on this same subject. This is from 1 Corinthians, chapter 15. Come with me to that reading, because we want to delve into that. Here, Paul begins again, as you would suspect, with a discussion of the resurrection of the dead. Because this is not really about those who are living; it is about the doctrine of the resurrection. In 1 Corinthians 15, I would like to begin at verse 12 and skip around through verse 58. But I invite you, and indeed I encourage you, to read all of it.

Paul is speaking,

Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? (1 Corinthians 15:12 NKJV).

What is the subject matter? The same as 1 Thessalonians, chapter 4. It is about how the dead will be raised.

But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did

¹⁴ See Isaiah 51:6: “Lift up your eyes to the heavens, And look on the earth beneath. For the heavens will vanish away like smoke, The earth will grow old like a garment, And those who dwell in it will die in like manner; But My salvation will be forever, And My righteousness will not be abolished.”

¹⁵ See Isaiah 34:4a: “All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll;” see also Revelation 6:14 KJV: “And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.”

not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ [the same as 1 Thessalonians] have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep (1 Corinthians 15:13-20, comments added in brackets).

Which is to say what? He has become the first example of those who have fallen asleep. Now Paul goes on to talk about the resurrection, and he says at verse 23,

But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming (1 Corinthians 15:23).

So you who are alive and remain at His coming, then you are included in that as well. Now I have to skip through much of the verses of the Scriptures, and I want to go quickly to verse 35 which says,

But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?" (1 Corinthians 15:35)

That concerns those who have been buried—dead and buried. Then he says you are foolish if you do not know that you do not resurrect the same form of that which died, and he gives examples of different kinds of things, such as wheat. So, a grain of wheat does not produce a grain of wheat when it is resurrected. It produces a full plant with multiple ears, so there is an exponentializing. And at verse 40 he says, "There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies." Then he concludes in verse 42,

So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption (1 Corinthians 15:42).

In other words, a body that is decaying, falling down and getting old, it is raised a different form of body. Verse 44 defines it specifically. It says,

It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit (1 Corinthians 15:44-45).

Then he says at verse 49,

And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man (1 Corinthians 15:49).

So you were once clothed in Adam; you will also be clothed in the spiritual body of Christ. Meaning, you are assembled to Him in His resurrected form, and you will be revealed with Him in that form. I want to get right to where 1 Corinthians 15 connects to 1 Thessalonians 4:15-16.

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet [That is 1 Thessalonians 4¹⁶]. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

*“O Death, where is your sting?
O Hades, where is your victory?”*

The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹⁶ See 1 Thessalonians 4:15-16: “For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.”

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:51-58, comments added in brackets).

Did you note the exact parallel? The trumpet will sound, the dead in Christ will rise first—in a different form, a spiritual form; those who have fallen asleep in Christ, that is the form of their resurrection—and those who are alive will be changed in an instant to that form as well. Between Thessalonians and Corinthians, the whole picture is presented to us. These are primarily teachings on the resurrection. How on earth did they become twisted into teachings on the rapture, a thing that does not exist in Scripture?

I will have a little bit more to say on it at the beginning of the next session.

Bless you. Bye-bye.