



**Doctrine: The Rapture of the Church  
A Conversation About the Resurrection  
Part 6**

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11  
1 Corinthians 15:35-58**

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I have planted Mexican milkweed all around the house. Some would consider it to be a weed but to the Monarch butterfly, it is a source of food created by the Lord specifically for them. They literally go crazy hitting the flowers and then returning and laying eggs nearby.



Because of their general disposition to feed only on milkweed, they are identified also as milkweed butterflies. When new caterpillars hatch, they hatch hungry and head right up the milkweed plant that mom placed them by. They head up the stem and once that first leaf is reached, lunch begins. I have watched a single plant covered with 5 caterpillars be completely stripped in just a few hours.

They start off as small black, yellow and white caterpillars and wind up as fat caterpillars. Once that feeding is complete, that is when the magic begins. The caterpillar climbs up an adjacent plant, finds a stable leaf or stem, hooks its tail to that, and then enters a cocoon. What happens is almost magic like. The caterpillar literally dissolves into sticky slimy goo, but it is not dead, just changing. But it looks dead.

There is a picture being created here for us, and it points us to what Paul discusses as he talks about the resurrection. That event which takes place for the church at the moment of the rapture.

Biologist Bernd Heinrich calls the cocoon stage ““a deathlike intermission.” Inside, these caterpillars shrink, shed their skin, their organs dissolve. Their insides turn to mush. Most of their cells die. But lurking in the goo are a few cells (the so-called adult or "imaginal" cells) that at this moment jump into action, reorganize all the free-floating proteins and other nutrients and turn what was once caterpillar into ... here comes the resurrection ... a butterfly!

What's happened, says Heinrich, is that the caterpillar section of the DNA has been turned off, and the butterfly instructions have been turned on. "[T]here are indeed two very different sets of genetic instructions at work," he writes, and this switch, turning "caterpillar" off, turning "butterfly" on, means that "most of one body dies and the new life is resurrected in a new body." (Krulwich 2012)

But here is the thing, if the caterpillar does not “die,” then there is no butterfly.

We are in the book of 1 Thessalonians 4:13 – 5:11, this is the section that teaches us about the rapture of the church, the resurrection and the day of the Lord. As we have discovered, it is not the only place this doctrine appears.

Of course, Jesus is the one who made the announcement of this new doctrine in John 14. We have learned that there are Biblical examples of raptures and rescues, and we have examined what Paul taught the church in Thessalonica. He was expecting the imminent return of Jesus Christ for His church and personally hoped to be part of that group who would be raptured or changed.

### Our Map

- John 14:1-3 Jesus - I go to prepare a place and will come back and get you.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 First the rapture.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 Then the Day of the Lord.
- **1 Corinthians 15:51-58 Details about what the resurrection and the rapture looks like.**
- 2 Thessalonians 2:3 First the apostasy. Then the Beast, antichrist, man of sin, etc. is revealed.
- Revelation 3:7-13 And the rapture is before the Tribulation.

We are now examining the text in 1 Corinthians 15 where Paul has a discussion with the church in Corinth about the resurrection and what some of the details are about the rapture as it takes place at almost the same instant as the resurrection of the church.

Paul will use a similar example to the butterfly, but it will be one more oriented to an agrarian society which is involved in growing crops.



Paul has already redefined what death is for the believer. He uses the same term that Jesus used as He prepared to raise Lazarus from the dead.

John 11:11

“After saying these things, he said to them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.”” (ESV)

Paul’s recharacterization of the reality of what death means for the believer is evident clearly in 1 Thessalonians. It was part of his teaching and for the believer, his expectation was simple, all believers would have this same perspective of what we know of as death, is in reality a “sleep.” This was new in the pagan world of Corinth and wound up being reflected even in the name we now use for the place we bury people, cemetery. It is not soul sleep as we discussed before.

The pagan burying-place carried in its name no suggestion of hope or comfort. It was a burying-place, a hiding-place, a monumentum, a mere memorial of something gone; a columbarium, or dove-cot, with its little pigeon-holes for cinerary urns; but the Christian thought of death as sleep, brought with it into Christian speech the kindred thought of a chamber of rest, and embodied it in the word cemetery (κοιμητήριον)—the place to lie down to sleep. (Vincent 1887, 486)

Those who are in communion with Christ, believers, simply go to be with Him when the physical body dies.

You see, you, the real you, your spirit, does not die. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, at the moment of death, you go to be with Jesus. We are, all of us waiting to be with Him, longing for His promise (2 Corinthians 5:2).

But if you are not a believer, then your spirit goes to Sheol. And as we learned from Jesus in Luke 16, those who are there are very aware of where they are and why they are there. “And in Hades, as he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far off with Lazarus at his side.” (Luke 16:23, NET 2nd ed.)

2 Corinthians 5:1–8

“For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. **For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling**, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.” (ESV)

For us, death means an escort of angels (Luke 16:22) into the presence of Jesus Christ. For us, we are either in our physical bodies here on earth serving our Lord, or, if our physical body dies, we are then clothed in our heavenly clothing, in our spiritual bodies and with the Lord. We long to put on what it is the fallen angels took off (Jude 6). We long for our glorified bodies. This is a reality that Paul expects us to live in the awareness of.

1 Corinthians 15:35–44

“But someone will say, “How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?” You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own. All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of mankind, another flesh of animals, another flesh of birds, and another of fish. There are also heavenly



bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another. There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.” (NASB 2020)

Paul wants us to understand that the soul does not end, but the physical body does. He is talking about the resurrection of the body.

How can a physical body be resurrected and be the same? Good question. Many of those who were believers in the past and went home are now part of the soil having returned to the dust we came from. With modern warfare, someone simply no longer exist physically. So, this is a really good question to be asked then as well as now.

Paul uses examples from nature showing that the resurrected body is not identical to the physical body we have now, they are the same, but not identical. He uses the example of planting grain and how the seed becomes something else as a result of being planted.

The seed that is planted dies, it is gone becoming a plant. But that plant will produce more seed, not the same seed that was planted, but like it.

He talks a bit about bodies making sure we understand that if you plant wheat, you get wheat, if a person dies, a person will be resurrected. You don't come back as something else. He repudiates reincarnation here with his statement “All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of mankind, another flesh of animals, another flesh of birds, and another of fish.” (1 Corinthians 15:39, NASB 2020)

A person cannot and will not come back as a goat.

Reincarnation is not in the Bible. There is no such thing as karma, having to come back time and time again to work out the bad stuff we do. That is all eastern mysticism.

Jesus died on the cross for that.

Hebrews 9:27–28 “And just as **each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgment**, so also **Christ was offered once for all time as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people**. He will come again, not to deal with our sins, but to bring salvation to all who are eagerly waiting for him.” (NLT)

Here is a simple exercise for us to help understand what Paul is trying to point out to us. As we look at ourselves, it is difficult for us to look at this perishing body and envision what our glorified body will be like. But know that when Christ appears, you will be like Him and will see Him as He really is.

We have a promise, and the Holy Spirit is the down payment for that.

2 Corinthians 1:21–22

“It is God himself who makes us, together with you, sure of our life in union with Christ; **it is God himself who has set us apart, who has placed his mark of ownership upon us, and who has given us the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the guarantee of all that he has in store for us.**” (GNB)

The giving of the Holy Spirit to each of us as believers is the pledge, the earnest money, the down payment provided to assure us that everything He promised to do, He will do. This includes eternal life,



being in the presence of the Lord the moment our physical body dies, and the resurrection. And that is just the tip of the iceberg.

Back to his argument in our text, “how are the dead raised,” simple, they are. You will have a human body, but it will be one just like the one Jesus has, glorified. Better than what Adam and Eve had prior to the fall. When we are in our glorified bodies, we will be in a body just like the one Jesus had at His resurrection. Stephen Presley states:

“When the resurrected Christ appeared and conversed with others, there was obvious continuity with his former body: the disciples recognized the Lord, touched him, and confirmed he was not a phantom. At the same time, his new resurrected body did not experience normal limitations, nor was it subject to suffering, sin, and death (Rom 6:9). Thus, the glorified body is not a different body but a different form of the same body: it is what Paul calls “a spiritual body” (1 Cor 15:42–44). Following the example of Christ, the New Testament speaks about the glorified body as more than the mere resuscitation of a dead body. Christ will transform the bodies of the faithful to be like his glorious body.”

Philippians 3:20–21

“But our citizenship is in heaven—and **we also await a savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform these humble bodies of ours into the likeness of his glorious body by means of that power by which he is able to subject all things to himself.**” (NET 2nd ed.)

“The resurrected body will be suitable to the conditions of immortality and enjoy all the blessings of dwelling in the presence of the glory of God. The glorified body will also experience freedom from all the encumbrances of time and space, and it will have new attributes, such as incorruptibility (1 Cor 15:52), subtlety (John 20:19)(aka walking through walls), and glory (1 Cor 15:43). Some speculate about other attributes, wondering for example what the apparent age of believers will be in their resurrection bodies; the Bible simply does not reveal many specifics.” (Presley 2018)

Now I understand why Paul was excited and ready for this to take place. This is true reality. “God wills to raise the dead and transform the body committed to the grave into one fitted for glory, and God has the power to do so.” (Garland 2003, 729)

Our earthly bodies are not suitable for being in the presence of God. As much as we love and serve Him, this flesh is simply not going to make it. But Enoch, Elijah, indeed, examples of other raptures/changes. Moses learned that lesson direct from YAHWEH. Moses was still in his earthly body, God loved him and wanted him to see His glory, but He also was concerned for his safety.

This is one of those times where we begin to understand just how much the fall resulted in changes to our human bodies since prior to the fall, Adam and Eve lived in the presence of God.

Exodus 33:18–23

“And he said, “Please, show me Your glory.” Then He said, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” But He said, “**You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.**” And the LORD said, “Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.”” (NKJV)

Paul points out that there are earthly bodies, and there are those bodies suitable for being in the presence of God, heavenly bodies. Each are distinctly different.



1 Corinthians 15:40

“There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the *glory* of the earthly is another.” (NASB 2020)

When Paul talks about glory, he makes reference to the heavenly body but when the word glory shows up as it pertains to the earthly body, it is in italics in my translation. Why?

The word is not in the Greek text but has been added by the translator. The NET Bible translates this verse with the second glory out of the picture.

1 Corinthians 15:40

“And there are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies. The glory of the heavenly body is one sort and the earthly another.” (NET 2nd ed.)

The word used by Paul in the Greek is the word δόξα (doxa). It means “a manifestation of light radiance, brightness, splendor...as a manifestation of God’s excellent power glory, majesty. (Friberg, Friberg and Miller 2000, 119)

The sense of the word, as it is used here is speaking about the glory of the heavenly body, this is a body that has the quality of emitting beautiful and bright light: often referring to the transcendent nature reflective of God’s glory. Moses reflected this glory to the nation, and it scared the bejabbers out of them.

Exodus 34:29–35

“Now when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand—when he came down from the mountain, **Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him.** When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to approach him. But Moses called to them, so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and Moses spoke to them. After this all the Israelites approached, and he commanded them all that the LORD had spoken to him on Mount Sinai. When Moses finished speaking with them, he would put a veil on his face. But when Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he would remove the veil until he came out. Then he would come out and tell the Israelites what he had been commanded. When the Israelites would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses’ face shone, Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with the LORD.” (NET 2nd ed.)

Jesus personally revealed His own glory when He was transfigured before a few of His disciples (Matthew 17:2, Mark 9:2-3) and John saw Jesus in all His glory again in Revelation (Revelation 1:12-16).

Paul tells us here the heavenly body has, among other attributes, this one of doxa, glory, light. We no longer reflect.

When he refers to the earthly body, that word is not used. It does not carry the same attributes as the heavenly body. This is reflected in the Greek text by the absence of the word doxa. “This creates a hierarchy of opposites: “earthly/below/lesser” and “heavenly/above/greater.”” (Garland 2003, 731)

The body we are to receive through the resurrection or in the rapture is so far out of our normal human comprehension, the best we can do is say it is like the one Jesus has. But it is a body and has physicality yet is also spiritual.

When one of my granddaughters learned that fact as a child, she was excited. She couldn’t wait to be able to walk through walls like Jesus does.



The disciples were able to touch Jesus, talk to Jesus and listen to Him as well. And in His glorified resurrected body, Jesus also ate. This is a physical body yet a spiritual body, one that is glorified and has more attributes connected to it than we have in our current physical bodies. No more disease, no more aging, no more impairments of any kind. My uncle will be whole, unimpaired and able to do all he couldn't do in his physical body.

1 Corinthians 15:42–49

“So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So also it is written: “The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING PERSON.” The last Adam was a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy one, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly one, so also are those who are heavenly. Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.” (NASB 2020)

Paul hits the point again, the body we currently enjoy, no matter how much we care for it, exercise it, feed it only the right foods, it still is in the process of decaying and dying.

In almost all animals, from the simplest to the most complex, telomeres are required for cell division. With each cell replication, the telomeres get shorter and shorter until they're so short that your cells can no longer divide. When cells no longer divide, tissues age. However, telomeres can be rebuilt by an enzyme called telomerase to restore cell division.

If you think we've found the fountain of youth, think again. If a cell keeps dividing uncontrollably and overcomes the limitations of telomeres, a cancerous tumor can form. This is why telomeres are so important. In healthy cells, they achieve the necessary balance between limiting cellular lifespan and your own longevity and keeping cancer growth at bay. (The Jackson Laboratory 2024)

Telomeres are like the end cap on DNA, they get shorter and shorter as we age.

In other words, all cells in our bodies have expiration dates embedded in them. We can slow the process with selenium or CoQ10, but we cannot stop it. (Pharma Nord 2022)

Until we are resurrected or changed, our bodies are indeed φθορᾶ (phtora), deteriorating and breaking down.

We are looking ahead to a body that is ἀφθαρσία (aphtharsia), immortal, unable to breakdown or decay. Not something that has been a reality since Genesis 3.

We will have a spiritual body, “not in the sense that it is somehow made out of spirit and vapors, but in the sense that it is determined by the spirit and gives the spirit form and local habitation.” (Hays 1997, 272)

1 Corinthians 15:45–49

“So also it is written: “The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING PERSON.” The last Adam was a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy one, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly one, so also are those who are heavenly. Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.” (NASB 2020)

This is why it is imperative for us to be born again. Because of the fall, we are like Adam, he fell and due to that became spiritually dead.



#### Genesis 2:7

“The LORD God formed the man from the soil of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.” (NET 2nd ed.)

That is the body we possess, one which came from the ground, and which will return to it because Adam initiated decay and death due to the fall. Christ is the picture of the second Adam.

Christ, by his resurrection, becomes “life-giving Spirit,” the initiator of a new order of humanity. The body associated with Adam (which Paul therefore calls psychikon) is mortal and bound to the earth from which it came; on the other hand, the body associated with the risen Christ (which Paul therefore calls pneumatikon) will be immortal and stamped by the image of “the man of heaven” (vv. 48–49). (Hays 1997, 272)

This takes us back to the discussion Jesus had with Nick at night in John 3.

#### John 3:5–8

“Jesus answered, “I tell you the solemn truth, **unless a person is born of water and spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.** Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must all be born from above.’ The wind blows wherever it will, and you hear the sound it makes, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”” (NET 2nd ed.)

Anyone who would enter the kingdom of God must be born in a radically new fashion, and this second birth is from heaven. Entry into the kingdom is not by way of human striving, but by that rebirth which only God can effect. (Morris 1995, 189)

The resurrection being discussed by Paul is one that only those who have been born physically as well as spiritually can participate in. That is only possible as a result of accepting the completed work of Jesus that He did on the cross.

#### Romans 3:21–24

“But now God’s way of putting people right with himself has been revealed. It has nothing to do with law, even though the Law of Moses and the prophets gave their witness to it. God puts people right through their faith in Jesus Christ. God does this to all who believe in Christ, because there is no difference at all: everyone has sinned and is far away from God’s saving presence. But by the free gift of God’s grace all are put right with him through Christ Jesus, who sets them free.” (GNB)

Paul concludes his comparison of Adam and Christ by pointing out that those who remain earthy, not born of the spirit, will continue to carry that picture of Adam who eventually died. But for all who have been born of the spirit, we have now added a second image to the picture being drawn. Yes, we are in physical bodies and at a point we fully identified with Adam, but now we also bear the image of Christ and will share in Him and what He has provided for us through His death and resurrection. Until He comes for us, we will continue to bear Adam’s characteristics of a natural body which is perishing. But a change and a transformation is indeed coming. Jesus promised.

But right now, we are still human. We are vulnerable, fragile, fallible and fully own a sin nature which is under the control of the Holy Spirit, but we are also still capable of rebelling and not being faithful to Jesus.

We are indeed headed for a significant change. One which is imminent. “The resurrection body is not a mere physical body, it is a supernatural physical body, spiritually powered, literally Spirit-dominated (1 Cor. 15:44).” (Geisler 2005, 270)





1 Corinthians 15:50–58

“Now I say this, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I am telling you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable puts on the imperishable, and this mortal puts on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written: “DEATH HAS BEEN SWALLOWED UP in victory. WHERE, O DEATH, IS YOUR VICTORY? WHERE, O DEATH, IS YOUR STING?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, be firm, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” (NASB 2020)

There is a division that currently exists here on planet earth. Those who have earth as their home, and then those who are no longer citizens of this planet. If you are in Christ, then you are part of that second group.

As we have been discussing the resurrection, it is obvious that those who are raised up have new bodies capable of inheriting the Kingdom. It does lead to a question though, the opposite of the one which was asked by the church in Thessalonica, what about those of us who are still alive when Jesus comes back.

That too is a good question.

1 Corinthians 15:51

“Behold, I am telling you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed,” (NASB 2020)

Yes, I have indeed famously seen this verse leading into nursery ministries, but there is more to it.

First, Paul refers to this as a mystery. The big mystery is that not all believers will die. There is a generation that will never taste death. What is a mystery in the Bible. It is not the same as what we see in pagan mystery religions.

What is a mystery? “We will define mystery generally as the revelation of God’s partially hidden wisdom, particularly as it concerns events occurring in the “latter days.” As we will see, scholars are on the right track when they define mystery as divine wisdom that was previously “hidden” but has now been “revealed.” We will attempt to sharpen this definition, but generally speaking this widely held understanding of the biblical mystery is correct. Augmenting this definition, mystery often means something close to our modern-day denotation—knowledge that is somewhat baffling. (Beale and Gladd 2014, 20)

Paul has been used by the Holy Spirit to reveal numerous mysteries since he uses the term at least 21 different times. Our interest is specific though to the mystery of the resurrection and the changing of those who are alive which Paul talks about here in 1 Corinthians 15.

Paul emphatically declares that he is disclosing a mystery in explaining the transformation of all believers into the heavenly image of Adam (1 Cor 15:51–52). Therein lies the key that was “hidden” from the Corinthians in their misunderstanding that the earthly body could not dwell in a heavenly environment. (Beale and Gladd 2014, 130)

The mystery here isn’t so much the resurrection, Paul has indeed added to the teaching already done in Corinth, but the mystery is that even those who are alive in Christ will be changed into a new form, into resurrection bodies without having to die.



That is not entirely new, we did see something about this in 1 Thessalonians, but now we have more detail and that is new. In Thessalonica, the worry was that the dead would miss out, they learned that was not the case and the dead would indeed take part. But now is added the detail of the change involves us also having glorified resurrection bodies, but not having to go through death first.

This is an entire generation of the church that simply will never die. And everyone, the entire church stretching from Pentecost to today will be changed. We will “all be changed.” Here it is not a when, but how this will take place.

1 Corinthians 15:52

“in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.” (NASB 2020)

The reason we must all be changed was stated earlier, flesh and blood cannot inherit, so instead, we will all be changed. Nothing is impossible with God, nothing. “The truth that not all will die, but that the resurrection and translation will occur for some still living is a mystery previously unknown.” (Bigalke Jr. 2006, 35)

The translation of our bodies from physical/earthy to spiritual/heavenly is instantaneous. The Greek word Paul uses here is the word ἀτόμῳ (atomo) meaning something “that is viewed as such a unit that it cannot be cut, esp. because of smallness (e.g. particle of matter, uncompounded word) indivisible.” (Arndt, et al. 2000, 149)

The translation, when this event takes place, it will be sudden and almost instantaneous. As we are hearing the Lord call us to come up to Him, we are changed and suddenly enabled to do so, so we obey.

At the moment a portal opens allowing the spirits of those who have gone to be with the Lord since Pentecost, and Jesus is there with them, that is the moment, the indivisible moment that everything takes place. In that moment, as the supernatural invades the natural and removes the church, multiple things happen pretty much all at once.

We have already seen some about this event in 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

1 Thessalonians 4:16

“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.” (NASB 2020)

The trumpet of 1 Thessalonians 4:16 is the same trumpet being discussed here in 1 Corinthians. Mortal bodies are unfit to go into the heavenly realm. “Consequently, it was necessary for them to be transformed into ‘imperishable’, immortal ones. It would be incorrect to conclude from what the apostle revealed that there is no real connection between the earthly body and the heavenly body; instead, the fundamental difference between one’s temporal and eternal existence was like a person putting on a new robe.” (Lioy 2011, 114)

Paul is emphasizing that it is this perishable and this mortal that will be clothed with imperishability and immortality. Clothe itself is a metaphor pointing us to the truth that the body is not the real person; it is only its clothing. In the life to come the real person will put on another suit, so to speak. (Morris, 1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries 1985, 223)

1 Corinthians 15:53–57

“For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable puts on the imperishable, and this mortal puts on immortality, then will come about the saying



that is written: "DEATH HAS BEEN SWALLOWED UP in victory. WHERE, O DEATH, IS YOUR VICTORY? WHERE, O DEATH, IS YOUR STING?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (NASB 2020)

Just like that, we have put on, been changed, into our glorified bodies and then ascend to join the rest of the church who are with Jesus.

The purpose of this coming of Christ is not to judge and then reign, but rather to meet His saints in the air and to have them "changed." Therefore, it is perfectly logical to understand that this last trumpet is referring to the end of the dispensation of the church. It is best identified as referring to the rapture of the church prior to the tribulation, since the trumpets mentioned in the tribulation have to do with the coming of Christ in judgment to establish His visible kingdom on earth. (Bigalke Jr. 2006, 36)

I say that because there are those who read this and then think it is pointing to the trumpet judgements in Revelation 11, it is not.

Let's think like a Corinthian for a moment. Paul has already taught them of the imminent return of Jesus Christ for His church. He wrote the letter to the Thessalonians while in Corinth and he was in Corinth for over a year. The Corinthians would have understood this event as connected with Christ coming for His church as promised in John 14. There is nothing anywhere in the context of 1 Corinthians that would indicate anything about intense Tribulation upon the planet preceding Jesus coming for His own.

Although Israel could not know the day nor the hour when the Lord will come, yet they can know that their redemption draweth nigh through the fulfillment of these signs. To the church no such signs were ever given. The church was told to live in the light of the imminent coming of the Lord to translate them in His presence (John 14:2-3; Acts 1:11; 1 Cor. 15:51-52; Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:4; 1 Thess. 1:10; 1 Tim. 6:14; Jas. 5:8; 1 Pet. 3:3-4). Such passages as 1 Thessalonians 5:6; Titus 2:13; Revelation 3:3 all warn the believer to be watching for the Lord Himself, not for signs that would precede His coming. (Pentecost 1958, 202-203)

We are to live in daily expectation of Jesus coming and taking us home immediately. Yes, living that way is difficult to do because it means we are still planning for the future and praying for the Lord to direct us as we make those plans, yet at the same time we have an awareness that He may come and make all those plans moot. Jesus Himself tells us "It will go well with that servant if he is found doing his job when his master comes." (Luke 12:43, CJB)

In other words, don't sell everything, charge up the credit cards to the max, hit your bucket list and then sit on a hill waiting for the rapture. We are to do life as normal, yet knowing today might be the day.

When Jesus rose from the dead, He defeated death. It will no longer be an issue from the point of the rapture on. Death has been overwhelmingly overpowered by the triumph of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

We hear the cry of victory of all the church here. "WHERE, O DEATH, IS YOUR VICTORY? WHERE, O DEATH, IS YOUR STING?" (1 Corinthians 15:55, NASB 2020)

This is a cry of victory from those who have placed their complete and total reliance on the work of Jesus Christ on the cross and His resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:58

"Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, be firm, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." (NASB 2020)



For the believer, this is a solid fact. Because of this, we can do life day by day, we are able to serve and do our best for Jesus because we know it is not in vain. Jesus promised to get us and He is standing right now at the door to do so.

If you do not know Jesus, please give your life to Him right now. We simply do not know when He will come, don't be left behind.

Romans 10:9–13

"If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced." Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For "Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved." (NLT)

### **ABC's of Salvation**

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.



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