

1 Corinthians 15:51-58 — “The Mystery of the Rapture: All Will Be Changed in a Moment!”

哥林多前书 15:51-58 — “教会被提的奥秘：全都要瞬间改变！”

INTRO-

- Are you ready for Jesus’ return? How watchful are you? Do you think of it often? Daily?
 - Is it your HOPE? Do you TALK of it? Do you LONG for it?
 - are you living READY and prepared as if he could come THIS VERY HOUR?
- **The story is told of a Christian speaking of his father leading in family worship.**
 - *The truth of the catching away of the church was important to my father. I remember him calling it to our attention as children. On one occasion after reading 1 Thessalonians chapter four, he quietly and methodically faced each of his six children with the question, "If Jesus returned tonight, would you be ready?" — wow!*
- **BIG PICTURE of the topic today “The Rapture”:**
 - The RAPTURE simply means: “catching up”/snatching away/ seizing of all Church-Age believers UP to meet Jesus in the clouds. It is the *next prophetic event* on God’s timetable!
 - Summary = Cross >> Church age > Rapture > Tribulation > 2nd Coming > Kingdom > Great White Throne > Eternal State
- **HOW DO WE GET TO THIS? HOW DO WE ARRIVE AT THESE CONCLUSION?**
 - 1) Proper starting point — Old Testament (OT) [begin w/ OT & then the NT builds on, supplements & adds to but the NT doesn’t replace, redefine or supplant the OT]. = progress of revelation.
 - 2) Proper hermeneutics — grammatical historical hermeneutic (historical, grammatical, literary interpretation; authorial intent; we go back to what the author intended by what he wrote at that time; what do the “words” mean in context in the progress of revelation.
 - 3) Proper framework — we get our conclusions exegetically not theologically (we interpret the text; not our theological system). Our *exegesis* drives/shapes our theology; Our eschatology must be exegetical from the text, not from a theological framework.
 - 4) Proper goal — the glory of God; it’s magnifying His glory & His worth.
- **ANOTHER IMPORTANT CLARIFICATION // to summarize:**
 - We are arguing the **NEED** for the rapture because of the differences of the 2nd coming & rapture
 - We are arguing the **COMFORT** for the rapture because Christ rescues & receives His people before judgment breaks
 - We are arguing the **TIME** of the rapture before the Day of the LORD/the day of wrath comes upon this world
 - We are arguing the **SWIFTESS** of the rapture because all believers are instantly changed, in a moment, when Christ comes

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- We are arguing the **UNEXPECTEDNESS** of the rapture because the coming doesn't come with signs or warnings
- We are arguing the **IMMINENCY** of the rapture because it could happen at any moment.
- We are arguing the **PURPOSE** of the rapture because it's exegetically sustainable and theologically consistent with God's character & His plan & purpose
- **THE RAPTURE SIMPLIFIED** — [*It is the next event on God's time-table*]
 - **What** takes place - John 14 (Jesus 'receives' us & takes us to heaven)
 - **How** it takes place - 1 Thess 4 (Jesus comes down & catches up his saints)
 - **For whom** it takes place - 1 Thess 4 "in Christ" (all those in Christ/believers/Church; dead NT saints & living saints; the rapture concerns **believers only**)
 - **When** it takes place - 1 Thess 5 (before the Day of the LORD/Trib)
 - **Where** it takes place - 1 Cor 15 (on earth/all believers will be changed instantly)
 - **Why** it takes place - Rev 3:10 (so the Church escapes the hour of testing that comes upon the whole world to judge unbelievers)
 - **Hope** that it'll take place - 1 Cor 15 - raised with a new body; like Christ; eternally; victoriously over death Forevermore!
- Let me pause real quick and remind us of *foundational theology*:
 - We believe in a God who works miracles, RIGHT? **Of course!**
 - We believe in a God who can translate people from one place to the next, RIGHT? A God who creates & re-creates; a God who transforms & translates people. ***Our God is mighty!***
 - ✓like Jesus — who was physically, bodily raised up visibly to heaven (Acts 1)
 - ✓like Elijah — caught up to heaven in a whirlwind
 - ✓like Enoch — who walked with God & then he was not for God took him up
 - ✓like Paul — who was “snatched/caught up” to the 3rd heaven (2 Cor 12.4)
 - ✓like Philip — who was “snatched (raptured)” away and found himself at Azotus (Acts 8.39-40). - ***Of course God *can* do it ; and he has historically!***
- **WHY DOES ALL THIS MATTER?** [a right, robust precise understanding...]
 - Prophecy **comforts**
 - Prophecy **purifies**
 - Prophecy **instructs**
 - Prophecy **emboldens**
 - Prophecy **clarifies**
 - Prophecy **encourage**

1 COR 15 - resurrection chapter

- 1.The FACT of Christ's resurrection (1-19)
- 2.The ORDER of future resurrection (20-34)

3. The LIKENESS of our resurrection (35-41)
4. The BODY of our resurrection (42-49)
5. **The MYSTERY of our resurrection (50-57)**
6. **The BEHAVIOR in light of our resurrection (58)**

****READ THE TEXT** (1 Cor 15.51-58)**

>>> some initial observations [simple hermeneutics]

1. There is coming a time when living believers will be translated = imminency
2. it will happen to every single believer alive (none excluded; not partial) = inclusion
3. it will be instantaneous, swift and unexpected = instantaneous
4. The dead in Christ will rise together with us putting on the imperishable = imperishable
5. We will have then put on immortality & death will be conquered = immortality
6. We are thus called to holy living = implementation

**THESIS — Journey with me thru this text on the Rapture-Event — the
resurrection/translation of all saints in Christ to meet Jesus!**

I. This resurrection is MYSTERIOUS (51)

- A. again: a mystery in the NT always refers to that which had before been HIDDEN and unknown but now its revealed.
- B. The CHURCH (a mystery); Union of Jew/Gentile in one body - a mystery (Eph 2-3); Marriage - a mystery of Christ & the Church (Eph 5); Christ in YOU a mystery (Col 1); partial hardening of Israel & then a re-gathering & regeneration of Israel in the end-times (Rom 11); rapture - a mystery (1 Cor 15.51). Something *new* that God now reveals!

II. This resurrection is TRANSFORMING (51b)

- A. πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα - we will all be changed—2x: v.51 & v.52
- B. a supernatural metamorphosis; a sovereign recreation from ONE form to another > from earthly to heavenly

III. This resurrection is INSTANTANEOUS (52a)

- A. ἐν ἀτόμῳ - in an “ATOM” — something so small it cannot be separated/divided; in a moment; a flash; instant; swift; a tiny moment of time.
- B. ἐν ῥιπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ - in the twinkling of the eye (swift/quick/brief)
- C. ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ σάλπιγγι - at the last trumpet > the last trump that NT believers/church age will hear (1 Thess 4) [God has many ‘trumpets’ that are blown in the end-times— Rev 8-9; Rev 11; Matt 24.31].
 1. >> we know our Bibles. this is what God does. in EX 19.16-17 - God blew the trumpet on Sinai for Israel to come meet God!
 2. THE POINT> in the smallest possible time, in an instant we will be changed everlastingly. God makes the signal & gathers us unto Himself *instantly*.

IV. This resurrection is GLORIFYING (52-54)

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- A. οἱ νεκροὶ ἐγερθήσονται ἄφθαρτοι - the dead will be raised up IMPERISHABLE (dead NT saints will be raised glorified bodies!)
- B. ἡμεῖς ἀλλαγησόμεθα. — and we will be changed // our fleshly bodies will be raised to GLORIFIED bodies
1. “both groups of believers receive the same type of eternal body, but they get it in two different ways” - glorified, perfect bodies (Phil 3.20-21).
 - a) Dead – resurrected with new bodies.
 - b) Living – translated with new bodies.
- C. v.53 - “FOR” >> let me explain - γὰρ
- D. v.53 - perishable = φθαρτὸν = corruptible; we are subject to corruption, decay, death, perishing
- E. v.53 - mortal = θνητὸν = mortal; liable to death; subject to death; dying; those who are decaying.
- F. v.54 - THEN > it will be true: Death is swallowed up in victory >> Your Eternal, Glorified Life will prevail!
1. > and the context of these quote “Death is swallowed up in victory” is from **Isaiah 25.8 !!!**
 2. The OT context is those who are well-prepared for earthly banquet of God for all nations in Jerusalem, in the Kingdom, on earth
 3. After the Judgment on the earth (Isa 24); then the Kingdom on earth dawns (Isa 25) > and those with new bodies will be prepared to enter!
 4. 1 Cor 15 shows this is PREPARATION AND NECESSARY for us to be ready for that earthly kingdom (soon to come!). ***Don’t miss the context of where Paul quotes from & how he uses Isaiah here!*** He intends you to see the **preparation for Kingdom life here**.
- V. This resurrection is VICTORIOUS (54-57)
- THE BIG PICTURE == DON’T MISS IT!**
- >> **1 CORINTHIANS 15 TEACHES THAT “DEATH IS DEFEATED!”**
- the resurrection is sure!
- the resurrection is real!
- the resurrection is coming!
- the resurrection is personal!
- >> **DEATH IS DEFEATED!**
- A. v.54 - death swallowed up in victory - Isa 25
- B. v.55 - O death where is your victory >>> A TAUNT to the lion that has been declawed — where’s your power?
- C. v.55 - Death, where is your sting? > Christ bore the sting of death so we bear NONE of it.
- D. v.56 - the sting of death is SIN > all harm in death is caused by sin and death itself comes from SIN (Gen 3 onward)
- E. v.56 - and the power of sin is (=comes from/seen from/revealed by) the Law >> the Law reveals God’s standards; sin is exposed!
1. men die because they have broken the LAW! >> and the power of the Law reveals the pervasiveness of sin = & judgment

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- F. v.57 - thanks be to GOD who gives us the **victory**
1. 1 Chron 29.11 - Yours o Lord is the greatness, the power and the glory and VICTORY and majesty
 2. Psalm 20.5 - we will sing for joy over YOUR VICTORY
 3. Psalm 98 - God’s right hand and holy arm have gained the VICTORY for him

VI. This resurrection is SANCTIFYING (58)

- A. Be steadfast = to be settled; to be seated; to be situated.
- B. Be Immoveable = to be intensely and deeply settled; unmoved
- C. Be abounding = exceeding, overflowing, overdoing, lavishing
1. reminds me of Henry Martin — the missionary to India who determined to “BURN OUT FOR GOD” — and he did at age 35.
 2. your TOIL = labor, trouble, toil, exhaustive work; work to fatigue; wearisome and intense work and labor bringing sweat.
- D. **Christian:** a proper understanding of eschatology, end-times, the catching up of believers *fuels holy living, it motivates urgent evangelism, & it animates heavenly-mindedness!*
1. *Let us live fully & look upward for Christ! Let us give our all & gaze upward for Christ! Our bridegroom is soon to return to Snatch us up to heaven before the Storm of Judgment — the day of the Lord — comes upon this world!*

CONCL-

- so what for us??? there are *many* practical *implications* of the rapture for your life right now!
- JOHN WALVOORD concludes his article the RAPTURE>
- Why has the rapture not occurred? The Bible tells us that God does not want anyone to perish (2 Peter 3:9). He wants people to hear the gospel who have not heard. He wants people to respond who have heard. He is waiting for the work to be completed. That is His plan. But one of these days, time will run out. Paul gives us good advice for living while we wait: "Stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain" (1 Cor. 15:58). **So Church — be strong, be steadfast, be immovable > abound in God’s Work!**