

Pentwater Bible Church

Isaiah Message 51

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The Rapture of the Church Artist Unknown

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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Isaiah Message Fifty-One

LITTLE APOCALYPSE OF ISAIAH PART III
RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH AND RESURRECTIONS

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INTRODUCTION

The word Rapture does not appear in our Bibles. It is from the Latin Vulgate that Jerome translated in AD 400 from the original Hebrew and Greek. He took the Greek word Parousia which, means “catching away” and used the Latin work Rapturo for Parousia. Frequently the word for a body that came back to life is called resurrection. This is special term that only applies to bodies that have come back to life with a permanent incorruptible eternal body.

JESUS PROMISES THE RAPTURE

John 14:1-3

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (KJV).

This passage only contains the promise of the Rapture Here Jesus promised to return for the believers. He is simply saying that there is a coming of Jesus for His saints. This passage says that the purpose of taking them was to be where He was then going. Since Jesus was then going to Heaven, this is a coming to take the saints to Heaven and not to the earth. The passage itself says nothing about the timing of the Rapture, only that the result of it is our entry into Heaven. This does not refer to our natural deaths and passage to Heaven. In that instance the angels will come for us and take us to Heaven (Luke 16:22). This passage shows us that there is a time when the Lord Jesus will come personally and take us to Heaven. Some have tied this to Jesus resurrection. This view has problems since verse 3 clearly indicated that He would come again after He went away. His going away refers to His going to Heaven. So therefore, He means after He ascends to heaven. Jesus had promised that He would come again and His future coming would be similar to His first coming which was from Heaven. So, will His coming for His Church be from Heaven. Some have asserted that this is a promise of the Holy Spirit coming after His ascension on the day of Pentecost. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came to earth to indwell believers, not take them to be where He is in Heaven. The coming is actually the counterpart of the going away. Jesus ascended physically to Heaven and He will come again from Heaven to receive His believers to Himself. Jesus did not ascend physically on the day of Pentecost. Some have referred to this as the Second Coming seen in Revelation chapter 19:11-16. We will respond to those claims when we examine the timing of the Rapture in our next session.

THE PROGRAM OF THE RAPTURE

I Thessalonians 4:13–18

¹³ But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. ¹⁵ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷ then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Wherefore comfort one another with these words (KJV).

The apostle Paul was comforting the saints at Thessalonica who thought that those who had died in Christ would miss out on the benefits of the Rapture of the Church. He uses the word sleep which is a synonym for death. So, the Bible teaches the death of believers is a temporary suspension of physical activity until the believer awakens at the Rapture. Just as physical sleep is a temporary suspension of physical activity until one awakens. In both cases there is no suspension of mental activity.

THE PROGRAM OF THE RAPTURE OCCURS IN SEVEN STAGES.

1. the Lord Himself descends from Heaven
2. with a shout
3. with the voice of the Archangel
4. with the trumpet of God
5. the Dead Saints shall rise first
6. then we that are Alive, that are Left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds
7. we meet the Lord in the air and shall ever be with the Lord

THE LIVING BELIEVERS ARE TRANSFORMED

I Corinthians 15:50–58

⁵⁰ Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹ Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. ⁵⁵ O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord (KJV).

What about those who are *not* dead at Christ's coming? Paul now turned to answer that *unexpressed*

question. Our bodies are only fitting for this earth in its corrupt state. Because they are made of flesh and blood the natural corrupt body, could not enter Heaven.

The Rapture of the church was a mystery (*mystērion*) in that it had not been known in the Old Testament but now was revealed. The dead in Christ will first be raised, and then the living will be translated instantaneously to our glorified resurrected bodies. The trumpet, as in the Old Testament, signaled the appearance of God (Exodus 19:16). It is the last blast for the church because this appearance shall never end (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Like the dead (I Corinthians 15: 42–43), the living will exchange the natural bodies which are corrupt since the Fall in exchange for the eternal and perfect ones (I Corinthians 15: 13:10). For genuine born-again believers in Christ, death's power will be removed.

Death came as a result of man's rebellion and disobedience against the command of God (Genesis 3:17–19). The Law, which epitomized the command of God, was thus the mirror against which human rebellion and disobedience was portrayed. Like the first Adam, all who followed him rebelled (I Corinthians 15: 2:14). But through the obedience of the last Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 15: 15:45; Romans 5:19; Philippians 2:8–11), came "victory" and life (1 Corinthians 15:22; cf. 2:15–16).

Paul's doctrinal declarations led to practical commands and I Corinthians fifteen's conclusion was no exception. The Corinthians were urged to stand firm in the apostles' teaching (I Corinthians 15: 2), unmoved by the denials of false teachers (Ephesians 4:14). This certainty, especially concerning the Resurrection, provided an impetus to faithful service (1 Corinthians 3:8; Galatians 6:9) since labor in the resurrected Lord is not futile (*kenos*, "empty"; I Corinthians 15:10, 14, 17, 30–32).

IMMINENCY

Something that is imminent means that it can happen at any time. It carries with it the certainty of an event occurring but also the uncertainty of not knowing when it will happen. Our English word actually comes from the Latin *immineo* meaning to overhang or project. Therefore, imminent means hanging over one's head ready to fall or overtake one. It also means close at hand in its incidence. Since we do not know when Christ's coming will be we say it is imminent. 1) We can't count on some amount of time transpiring before He comes. 2) We cannot legitimately set a date for it. 3) We cannot legitimately say it will happen soon. Because of this Christians should always be waiting patiently for our Lord to return at any time. Here are some New Testament passages that teach the imminent coming of Jesus.

I Corinthians 1:7

⁷ *so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (KJV).*

Paul had an ever-present sense of Christ's return as imminent while we wait.

I Corinthians 16:22

²² *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, Maranatha (KJV).*

The term Maranatha consists of three Aramaic words “Mar” (Lord), “ana” (our), and “tha” (come). It means “Our Lord Come.” It is a reference to the Imminency of the return of Jesus.

Philippians 4:5

⁵ Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand (KJV).

Here we are commanded to engage in appropriate conduct since His return is imminent (at hand).

Titus 2:13

¹³ looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ (KJV).

This is a direct command to look for the appearing of Jesus Christ. His return could happen and any time and therefore is our blessed hope.

James 5:7-9

⁷ Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. ⁸ Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. ⁹ Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door (KJV).

Just as a farmer waits for the crops to come from the ground in patience so should we also be patience in the coming of the Lord as it draws closer. This is a direct reference to its Imminency. The use of the Greek verb translated “draweth nigh” is in a perfect tense and indicative mood. What this means is grammatically that this action of waiting and drawing near continues. James is saying that Christ’s coming was drawing near before he wrote this and His coming continues to be near.

I John 2:28

²⁸ And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming (KJV).

If the readers would maintain their fellowship with God, they would enjoy a genuine boldness of speech when He will come (appear). This refers to our abiding in Jesus until He comes for us.

The exact point in all human history when this will occur is not given to us in Scripture. Christ even said we would not know the day or the hour as He discussed its Imminency.

Matthew 24:42

⁴⁰ Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. ⁴¹ Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. ⁴² Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. ⁴³ But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and

would not have suffered his house to be broken up. ⁴⁴ Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as you think not the Son of man cometh (KJV).

Philippians 3:20-21

²⁰ For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: ²¹ who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself (KJV).

Here Paul makes it clear that we wait and watch for the Lord to return at any time. When He comes He will change our corrupt bodies into a glorious resurrected body.

RESURRECTION

At death the human spirit is separated from the body (Genesis 3:19; Ecclesiastics 12:7; 2 Corinthians 5:8). A resurrection is an event whereby a dead body is raised to immortal life for some explicit purpose. This is different from somebody coming back to life. This doctrine is two-fold, pertaining to (A) the resurrection of Christ and (B) the resurrection of humanity, including both saved and unsaved. In other words, death does not end life it starts it! In the Old Testament the Doctrine of Resurrection is taught in Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2-3; Hosea 12:14. It was believed by the patriarchs (Genesis 22:5; with Hebrews 11:19; Job 19:25-27) and revealed through the prophets.

Daniel 12:2

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt (LKV).

In the New Testament the resurrection is taught in John 5:25-29, I Corinthians 15:50-51; I Thessalonians 4:14-18, and Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15. This doctrine contains the implication of immortality. They are raised to live forever. Christ was the first one to be raised from the dead with a resurrected body. Others were raised from the dead such as Lazarus but he had a normal body and died later (restored).

John 5:25-29

²⁵ Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. ²⁶ For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; ²⁷ And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. ²⁸ Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, ²⁹ And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation (KJV),

One of the fundamental truths of Christianity is the fact in Christ guarantees eternal life. We may experience physical death but not eternal death, which is separation from God. This is what happens to unbelievers. They die physically to an eternal damnation.

Jesus is God. Jesus has always been God and always will be God. His entrance into the world is called the incarnation. He was born with a normal human body albeit from a woman's egg fertilized by the Holy Spirit. It was still a human body. When Jesus died and rose again from the dead He was the first person of a human body to be resurrected.

1 Corinthians 15:20-23

But now is Christ risen from the dead, [and] become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man [came] death, by man [came] also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming (KJV).

THE FIRST RESURRECTION ORDER

This shows that all of the Christians shall live again or be resurrected and that there is an orderly progression of the stages of resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:20-23

²⁰But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. ²¹For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. (KJV)

The rest of the stages of resurrection are described in other books of the Scripture:

1. First, Christ rose from the dead (I Corinthians 15:2-23).
2. Next will be the resurrection of the Church age believers at the Rapture. (I Thessalonians 4:16).
3. Next will be the resurrection of the two witnesses in the middle of the Great Tribulation. (Revelation 11:11-12)
4. Next will be the resurrection of Old Testament Saints (Isaiah 26:19).
5. Last will be the resurrection of the Tribulation Saints (Revelation 20:4)

There is one more resurrection. It is called the Second Resurrection and it is for unbelievers only. It happens after the one-thousand-year Messianic Kingdom on earth is completed, and none of these unsaved people will be in the Eternal Order (Revelation 20:13).

OUR BODIES CHANGE

These verses in I Corinthians 15:54-58 describe that the body changes from corruption to incorruption, and is the final victory over death:

I Corinthians 15:50-58

⁵⁰Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall

not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵²In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal [must] put on immortality. ⁵⁴So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. ⁵⁵O death, where [is] thy sting? O grave, where [is] thy victory? ⁵⁶The sting of death [is] sin; and the strength of sin [is] the law ⁵⁷But thanks [be] to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. (KJV)

THE NATURE OF THE GLORIFIED BODY IS DESCRIBED HERE:

1 Corinthians 15:35-49

³⁵But some [man] will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? ³⁶[Thou] fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: ³⁷And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other [grain]: ³⁸But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. ³⁹All flesh [is] not the same flesh: but [there is] one [kind of] flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, [and] another of birds. ⁴⁰[There are] also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial [is] one, and the [glory] of the terrestrial [is] another. ⁴¹[There is] one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for [one] star differeth from [another] star in glory. ⁴²So also [is] the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: ⁴³It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: ⁴⁴It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. ⁴⁵And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam [was made] a quickening spirit. ⁴⁶Howbeit that [was] not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. ⁴⁷The first man [is] of the earth, earthy: the second man [is] the Lord from heaven. ⁴⁸As [is] the earthy, such [are] they also that are earthy: and as [is] the heavenly, such [are] they also that are heavenly. ⁴⁹And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. (KJV)

This section discusses the nature of the bodies of the resurrection of the believers. It is important that we completely understand this because we will experience this some day. The following points are made:

1. Most think this is foolishness
2. We have the example of nature to see how God does this
3. When a seed such as an acorn falls from a tree it is dead
4. It goes into the ground then comes back to life with a brand-new body
5. There are many types of bodies visible to us in nature and in the heavens
6. Our bodies are corrupt; that is, they are susceptible to aging and decay
7. Keeping with the seed illustration our bodies are put into the ground (sown) in dishonor (decay, aging and death) and raised in glory without the aging and decay. That is power.

8. It goes into the ground as a natural body and it is raised as a spiritual body
9. The two bodies are different characteristics
10. Adam the first man was made a living person, a human body.
11. The last Adam (Christ) was made a life-giving spirit because He was raised from the dead with an immortal body. He was the firstfruits of all that would be resurrected.
12. In like manner our bodies are first natural and when we are resurrected will be spiritual bodies.

BELIEVERS WILL HAVE A GLORIFIED, INCORRUPTIBLE BODY. WE HAVE CHRIST'S RISEN BODY AS AN EXAMPLE:

Philippians 3:21

²¹Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. (KJV)

Some further information may be seen from the resurrected Jesus' body, but we do not know what attributes are from the resurrection and which are attributed to His deity:

- His voice was recognized as being the same one He had before His death. (John 20:16)
- His physical features were recognized although not always immediately. (John 20:26-29)
- It was a real body of flesh and bone since it was embraceable. (John 20:17; 27)
- He was able to suddenly disappear. (Luke 24:31)
- He could go through walls. (John 20:19)
- His body could eat food. (Luke 24:41-43)

To summarize, a resurrected body will be:

- A body of resurrection power.
- A spiritual body.
- A heavenly body.
- An immortal body.

In our next session we will discuss the nature of the Church, the nation Israel, reasons for the Tribulation and the timing of the Rapture of the Church.

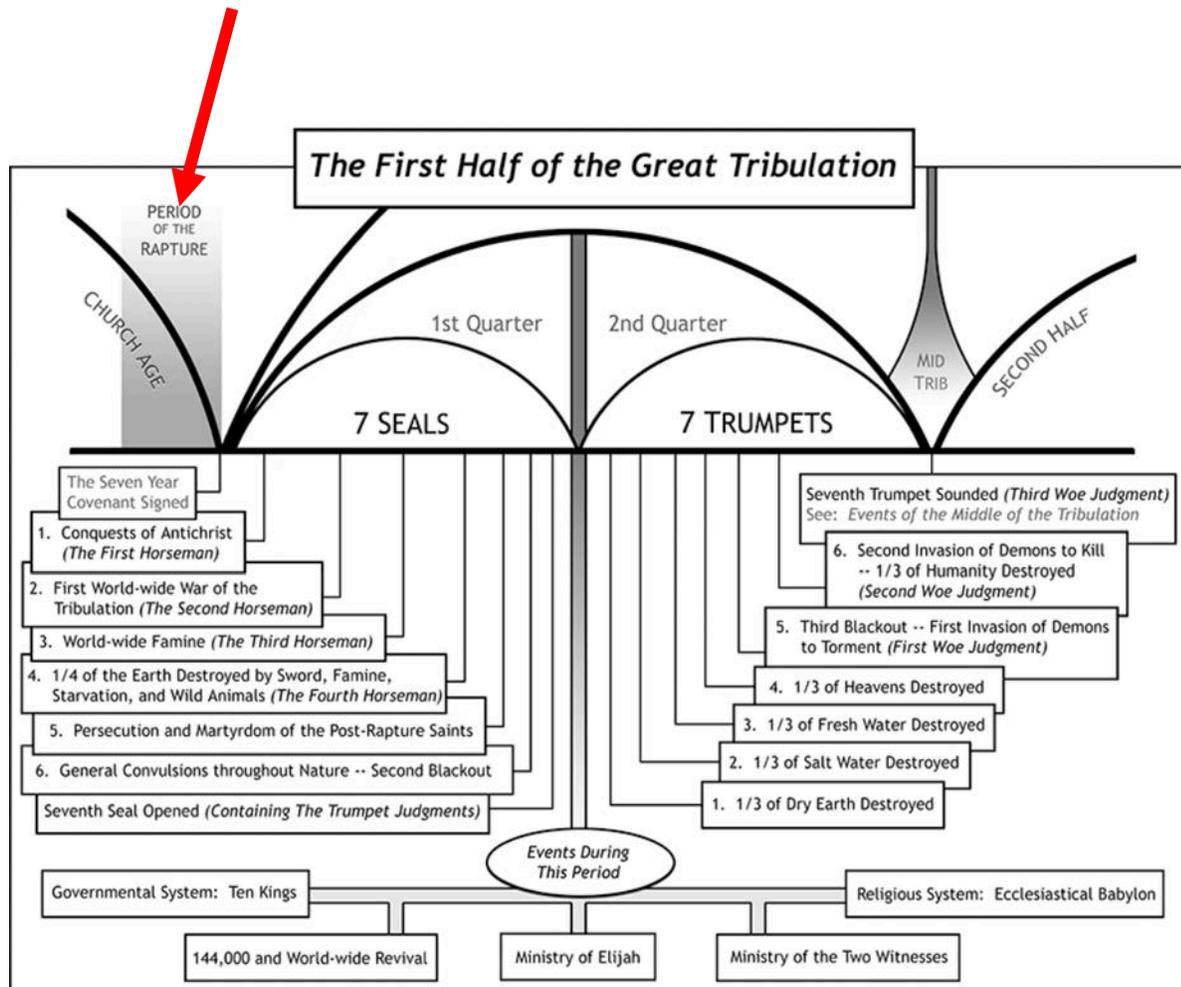


Chart ¹

NEXT MESSAGE: THE LITTLE APOCALYPSE PART IV

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¹ Fruchtenbaum, A. G. (2003). [The footsteps of the Messiah : a study of the sequence of prophetic events](#) (Rev. ed., p. 202). Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries.