

DEEPER TEACHINGS
(MEAT OF THE WORD)

#70

RAPTURE VS. RESURRECTION

By Buddy Cobb



A Faithful Apostolic Teacher of the Word

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PREFACE

In Matthew 13, Jesus, using parables to describe what the kingdom of heaven would be like between His first coming and His second coming, said this in verse 33:

The kingdom of heaven is like **leaven** which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened

Leaven in scripture is symbolic of error. This can be seen by such scriptures as in Mt. 16:6: Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

At first the disciples did not understand what Jesus was Talking about, but after Jesus explained, in verse 12 we read: They understood they how that He bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the **doctrine** of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

The apostle Paul, speaking on the subject of leaven in 1Co. 5:6-8, concludes with this in verse 8: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old Leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness: but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and **truth**.

We can see how leaven was used by both Jesus and Paul is a symbol of false doctrine! The three measures of meal are speaking of the three levels of truth that are referred to in the scriptures as milk, bread, and meat (I Co. 3:2; He. 5:12, 13; Jo. 6:32-35; 1 Co. 10:16, 17). The woman is symbolic of the church.

Paul, speaking to Timothy and warning him about this very thing in 1Ti. 4:3, 4, says: For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lust shall heap unto themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned to fables.

RAPTURE OR RESURRECTION

The idea that the church will be raptured out of this world at the end of this age was first introduced into Christian teaching in the latter part of the nineteenth century by a man named Darby. This teaching then gained wide acceptance through the teachings of Dr. C. I. Scofield. This doctrine was, not taught by any of the early church fathers; as a matter of fact, the word **rapture** is not even in the Bible.

The idea of a rapture, however, has great appeal, for such is to be preferred over the idea of one being able to enter the Kingdom of God only through much tribulation!

The fact that the early apostles of the church understood that it is through much tribulation is clearly seen in Acts 14:21, 22: And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had tonight nearly, they retired to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that **we must through much tribulation** enter into the Kingdom of God.

A popular teaching is that the Gentile church will be raptured out, and that a Jewish remnant will remain here on earth to usher in the one thousand year reign of Christ over the nations. The Scripture plainly states, however, that the church is neither Jewish nor Gentile, but that God in Christ has broken down the middle wall of partition, for to make in Himself of the twain one new man! He did this that He might reconcile both unto God in **one body** (Eph. 2:14-16)! Therefore, there is not a Gentile church and a Jewish church! There are not two bodies of believers; there is only one! This is plainly seen as well in Ep. 4:4: There is one body, and one spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling.

In 1Co. 15:38, the Scripture states that unto every seed is given his own body. There is, therefore, the body of the Gentiles, the body of the Jews, and the body of Christ! It is clear in Eph. 1:6 that the only place of acceptance of Jew or Gentile is in Christ! 11Co. 5:17 states: Therefore if any man

be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

We read in Gal. 3:27, 28: For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Further, we can see by the prayer of Jesus in Jo. 17:15 that it is not God's intention to rapture the church out of the world: I pray not that thou should take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil

The church is sown in corruption (i.e., this world, for as 1Jo. 5:19 states: "...the whole world lieth in wickedness.") that it might be **raised** in incorruption (1Co. 15:42). We can see therefore that the way up or out is not rapture but resurrection!

What the church needs to bring it up into incorruptibility and out of mortality into immortality is not a geographical change from earth to heaven, but rather a change of what we are! A change from being mortal, corruptible, earthy, to being immortal, incorruptible, heavenly! That this change takes place in resurrection is clearly taught in 1Co. 15:49-54: And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly,. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God: neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be **changed**, In a moment, in the twinkle of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, this mortal must put on immortality. 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.

The last enemy of the church to be destroyed is death (1Co. 15:26). We can see that it is only by the means of resurrection that death is overcome! What qualifies one for

the resurrection is clearly taught by Paul in Ph. 3:7-12: But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, Which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know Him, **and the power of his resurrection**, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; If by any means **I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead** Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. What is involved in knowing the fellowship of His sufferings is revealed to us in 1Pe. 4:1, 2:

FORASMUCH then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin: That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lust of men, but to the will of God.

What is involved in being made conformable unto His death is revealed to us in Ro. 6:10-12: For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lust thereof.

Ro. 6:1-5: What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How can we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness

of life. For if we have been planted in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection.

Any failure, therefore, to be in the likeness of His resurrection has its root in our failure to be conformed unto His death, which death is a death to sin! In order for us to escape being dead in sin, we must be dead to sin! This death to sin is essential to our knowing the Lord and being found in Him, for in Him there is no sin (1Jo. 3:5). Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him (1Jo. 3:6).

The idea that the church is going to be raptured up to heaven and perfected there, and then return with Christ, is not scriptural. God's will and purpose for the church is revealed in Ep. 1: 9, 10: Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he has purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth: even in him;

The reason for this is that being in earth or heaven doesn't make one **perfect**, but being in Christ does! We can see this clearly in Col. 1:27, 28: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man **perfect in Christ Jesus**:

For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And you are **complete** in him, which is the head of all principality and power (Col. 2:9, 10).

This is why the apostle Paul said that he wanted to be found in Him (Ph. 3:9). We must be found in Him in order to be presented perfect and attain unto the resurrection of the dead!

Therefore Jesus Himself taught while He was here the importance of our abiding in Him:

I am the vine ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned (Jo. 15:5, 6).

The means of abiding in Him is taught in 1Jo. 2:27, 28: But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and you need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you and is truth and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before at his coming.

If we are to avoid being ashamed at His coming and being disqualified for the **first resurrection**, we must be found in Him! We read about the **first resurrection** in Rev. 20:5, 6: But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first **resurrection**. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the **first resurrection**: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priest of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Concerning being found in Him, we read about this in Philippians 3:9-14: And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain onto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

The Lord is coming back, not for an imperfect church, but for a perfect one! Ephesians verifies this in the following verses, Eph. 5:25-27: Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That he might present it unto himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it **should be holy and without blemish.**

This perfection must be realized before He comes or we will not be ready! We read about this in Matthew 25:6-13: And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

Clearly the careless and ill prepared will be shut out, not raptured! That this is true can also be seen in Luke 13:23-28: Then said one unto him, lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and

Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

Certainly there has been no rapture for all the saints before us who have fought a good fight, finished their course, and kept the faith. They do have, however, a crown of righteousness coming, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give them at that day! These will not be ashamed at His coming, but will love His appearing:

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing (11 Tim. 4:7, 8).

The idea that Mt. 24:37-51 speaks of the rapture of the church is not verified by Scripture, for in the teaching of the rapture the righteous are gathered out and the wicked are left. The Scripture clearly states, however, that the wicked are gathered out and only the righteous shall remain, even as it was in the days of Noah!

For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the son of man be (Mt. 24:38, 39).

The plain teaching of Jesus in Mt. 13:38-51 is that the wicked are gathered out and the righteous remain:

As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be at the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity: And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. **Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.** Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

The old testament verifies as well that the righteous shall never be removed!

For the upright shall dwell in the land, and **the perfect shall remain in it**. But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it (Pv. 2:21, 22).

Ps. 104:35 states: Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Is. 13:9 states:

Behold the day of the Lord cometh cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and **He shall destroy the sinners out of it**.

This is why the apostle Paul taught the church in Ep. 6:13: Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand

Thus the question in Mal. 3:2 and Re. 6:17 is not who will be raptured, but who will be able to stand?

But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap (Mal. 3:2).

For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand (Re. 6:17)?

Further Hebrews 12:25-29 teaches us that what will be removed is all that can be shaken, and that only those things that cannot be shaken shall remain. In verses 28 and 29 we read:

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which **cannot be moved**, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.

Another scripture that is used to support the idea of a rapture is found in 1Th. 4:14-17:

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 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. 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: 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.

Note in verse 14 that the apostle Paul is pointing out that as Jesus died and rose again, in like manner God will bring forth those which sleep in Jesus (i.e., all who have kept the faith but are not physically alive at the time of this great event). Paul, speaking to the Corinthian church about this same matter, had this to say: Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you (11Co. 4:14). We also want to note that the saints spoken of here are not being raptured off to heaven, but rather they are those who have died physically and have gone to be with the Lord in heaven, and they are now being brought with Him as He descends from heaven! That this event is speaking of resurrection, not rapture, can be seen by the fact that at the sound of the trump of God, the dead in Christ **rise first!** Paul gives in greater detail a description of this event in 1Co. 15: We look again at verses 51, 52: Behold I shew 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 trump: For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead (that is, the dead in Christ), shall be raised incorruptible, we shall be changed.

There will be those who have kept the faith and are asleep in Jesus, and there will be those who have kept the faith and are alive and remain unto the time of this great event. Both will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the sound of the trump! This will complete the perfecting of the saints and will enable them to know both the Lord, and **the power of His resurrection!** It is in **resurrection** that we shall come forth out of death into His likeness! It is in **resurrection** that corruptible puts on incorruption, mortal puts on immortality, and death the last enemy is swallowed up in victory! It is only by our coming to know Jesus **and the power of His resurrection** that we will be able to join Him where He is, and fulfill the prayer that He prayed in Jo. 17:24: Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given

me, be with me where I am: that they may behold my glory. In 1Co. 15:42, 43 we read: So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory.

Jesus said of all who try to climb up some other way: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber (Jo. 10:1).

1Th. 4:16, states: 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**, and 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.

Scofield notes that this is the setting forth of the return of Christ, the rapture of the church, and the reunion of all believers (see Scofield's notes on 1Th. 4:17). However, as we have noted, this is not the setting forth of a description of the church being raptured to heaven. The place of meeting the Lord with all the saints is not in heaven, but in the air! The word **air** used here is the same as used in Ep. 2:2, where it tells us that when we walk according to the course of this world, we are walking according to "the prince of the power of the air!" The word **air** here is a description of the realm **the devil** has been given by God to operate in as the god of this world; where, as an angel of light, he blinds men to the truth and deceives the nations, as described in the following verses:

11 Cor. 4:4: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.

Re. 20:3, 7, 8: And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 'And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather

them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

Obviously God uses the devil as "the prince of the power of the air" to serve his purposes. We can see that this is so when we note that as soon as Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the River Jordan, He was led by the Spirit of God into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil! Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to he tempted of the devil (mat. 4: 1).

We can further see how God uses the devil in 11Th. 2:9-11 as the one working

...with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of truth! And for this cause god shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.

Jesus, speaking about the devil in Jo. 8:44, said:

He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar and the father of it That God has complete control over the devil is clearly seen by the fact that when He no longer has need for the devil to do his work, God puts him away with one angel!

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, When God has need of him, again He releases him out of his prison.

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth. Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea (Re. 20:7,8)

We can see by the above scriptures how God will again use the devil to deceive all the nations that love not the truth (goat nations, called Gog and Magog) and to gather the together to battle! After this final testing of the nations, God will have no further use for the Devil. God will have by then

used him to sift the saints, (Lu. 22:31). And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.

Then as we have seen, God will use him finally to sift the nations, after which he is put away once and for all in the lake of fire!

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of Fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet Are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and Ever (Re. 20:10)

We can see then that at the coming of the Lord and at the time of our being gathered unto Him (11 Th. 2:1), that the saints who are alive and remain will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1Th.4:17). The clouds spoken of here are symbolic of the saints that have been faithful witnesses of the Lord He. 12: 1). As Scofield notes, this is speaking of the reunion of the saints who are asleep in Jesus with those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord. Together they are the clouds of heaven spoken of in Dan. 7:13. The place where all will meet the Lord is in the air!

This is the very place where the devil has had his power as the god of this world and as the prince of the power of the air! The time of this great event is spoken of in Daniel 7:13-18. I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. But the saints of the most high shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.

Daniel 7:27: And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose

kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

We also read about this future event in Re. 11:15:
And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become **the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ**; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

For as it says in He. 2:5: For unto the angels (i.e. the Devil and his angels) hath He not put in subjection the world (age) to come.

The reference in Re.11: 15 to "our Lord and His Christ," is the Holy Spirit pointing out that the reins of government over the age or world to come will be given to Jesus and His brethren! These are those who have, by resurrection, come forth unto a perfect man, unto the fullness of the stature of Christ! For all who hold their confidence steadfast unto the end are made **partakers of Christ!** As it says in He. 3:14: For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.

Among these partakers of Christ are those saints that have gone before us, and are now asleep in Jesus, spoken of in He. 11:33-35:

... who through faith subdued kingdoms wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouth of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness was made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight, the armies of the aliens, women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain **a better resurrection.**

Note that all these are not looking forward to a rapture, but rather to **a better resurrection!** They are having to wait, however, for the rest of their brethren, as it says in He. 11:39, 40:

And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect

That this "being made perfect" is accomplished by resurrection and not by rapture, again, is made clear by the apostle Paul in Ph. 3:10-12:

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

All who apprehend that for which they have been apprehended of Christ Jesus will not be in a rapture, but in something far better: **A better resurrection!** The better resurrection is the **first resurrection!** We read about this **better resurrection** in Rev. 20:5, 6:

But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished This is the **first resurrection**. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the **first resurrection**: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

As we have seen this **first resurrection** is to take place at the coming of the Lord! The resurrection is what perfects us and brings us up out of the realm of the dead into the realm of incorruptibility, immortality and glory, where Jesus is! All who attain unto this **First resurrection** will be ready to rule and reign with Jesus over the nations, replacing the devil and his angels, who are the present rulers and powers of darkness! Re. 14:1-4 pictures for us these "first fruits" unto God and to the Lamb:

And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no

man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the **firstfruits** unto God and to the Lamb.

In Re. 20:4, we can see that those who have attained unto the first resurrection will have judgment committed unto them, and they shall live and reign with Christ, over the nations, a thousand years. This is the promise of the Lord to the church in Re. 2:26, 27:

And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, To him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron: as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

And in Re. 3:21: To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne.

Also in Re. 19:14, 15, we are given a picture of the Lord's coming with His saints to set up God's kingdom on earth, and to execute judgment over the nations:

And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen,, while and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

As we have seen, at this time the devil will be removed as "the god of this world" and will be shut up in the bottomless pit for the time of the one-thousand-year reign of the Lord and His Christ, during which time lie will not be able to deceive the nations as before. Therefore, as it says in Hab. 2:14: The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea Also in Is. 11:1-9 we are given a more detailed description of this time:

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and

understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reigns. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

This peace and safety on earth, which will be the result of the kingdoms of this world becoming the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, is what the whole creation is waiting for:

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for **the manifestation of the sons of God**. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body (Ro. 8:19-23).

What then is the earnest expectation of the creation? Not the rapture of the church, but **the manifestation of the sons of God!**

We also can see what we, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, are waiting for is not a rapture, but the final act of redemption as sons, which will be the redemption of our bodies!

This is when the Lord will change our vile body like unto His glorious body (Ph. 3:21)! When and how will this happen?

But some man will say, How, are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou soweth is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou soweth, thou soweth not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain; But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. So is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: 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 (1 Co. 15:35-38, 42-44).

Until the sons of God experience the final act of redemption (i. e. the bodily change that takes place only in resurrection), it is not yet time for them to be manifested, for it does not yet appear what they shall be:

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God: Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be (I Jo. 3:1, 2).

Jo. 1: 12 tells us that as many as received Him, to them gave he power (authority) to become sons of God, even to them that believe on His name. We read also in He. 2: 10 that it is God's purpose to bring many sons to glory:

For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

As has been shown, the Scripture clearly teaches that Sonship is realized by **resurrection**, not by rapture. It is only by **resurrection**, not rapture, that one can be changed from corruptible to incorruptible, from mortal to immortal,

and not be only alive, but alive forever more, as death is swallowed in victory!

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, there shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory (I Co. 15:54).

Having been sown in dishonour, the sons will be raised in glory; having been sown in weakness, they will be raised in power, as stated in 1Co. 15:43: It is sown in dishonour it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

In this way all the sons shall be changed! Behold I shew you A mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed (1Cor. 15:51)

Then they shall be just like Him, for this is the purpose of God in calling them!

For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son, that He might be the first born among many brethren (Ro. 8:29).

When Jesus was questioned by certain of the Sadducees, that denied that there is a resurrection, they asked Him:

Saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her to wife, and he died childless. And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children, and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore **in the resurrection** whose wife of them is she? for the seven had her to wife (Lu.28;28-33).

In Luke 20:34-36, Jesus answered:

Jesus answering said unto them, the children of this world marry, and are given in marriage, but they that are accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage. Neither can they die any more: For they are equal unto the angels; and

are the children (sons) of God, being the children of the resurrection.

Those who are **accounted worthy** to obtain unto this grand and glorious event will be the "first fruits" unto God and the Lamb, and ready to be glorified together with Christ:

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together (Rom. 8:16,17).

Jesus was speaking about this very thing to His disciples in Jo. 6:38-40, where He said:

And this is the father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should **raise it up again** at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and **I will raise him up at the last day**. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should **raise it up again at the last day**. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Note it is clearly stated by Jesus that the Father's will for all which He has given Him is that He should **raise them up again the last day!** Not rapture them off to heaven! That this being "raised up again the last day" is speaking of the resurrection is clearly seen by the conversation between Martha and Jesus:

Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus said unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day (Jo. 11:21-24).

The reason why Jesus speaks of **raising us up again** is understood when we consider the fact that all born again believers have already been raised once. This is seen in Ep. 2:4-6:

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath **raised us up together**, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

It is this initial being raised up, out of being dead in sins, that changes our status With the Lord:

Now, therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God (Ep. 2:19). For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth) (Ep. 5:8, 9).

While this initial "quickening" changes our status and gives us a place in the household of God, it is still required of **us** to walk as children of light and make our calling and election sure!

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom our Lord and Saviour. Jesus Christ (11Pe. 1: 10, 11).

This initial status and place in the household of God is given to us on the basis of the sacrificial death of Jesus on our behalf. Though we had been sold under sin by Adam, and were, as children of darkness, dead in trespasses and sins, by the atoning work of Jesus we can receive forgiveness of our sins, be quickened from the dead, and brought forth as children of light!

This is all on the basis of what Jesus accomplished by **His walk and His death** on our behalf. His walk and His death do not, however, make our calling and election sure! We still have to go on to perfection! We still have to apprehend that

for which also we are apprehended of Christ Jesus; to know Him, and the power of His resurrection! We can only accomplish this by **our own walk and our own death:**

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore **we are buried with him by baptism into death:** that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so **we also should walk in newness of life.** For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For **he that is dead is freed from sin.** Now **if we be dead with Christ,** we believe that **we shall also live with him** (Ro. 6:3-8).

Then we will not only be alive, but alive forever more! Then will death, the last enemy, be swallowed up in victory! Then will we experience the final adoption as sons, to wit, the redemption of our bodies! Then shall it appear what we shall be! Then will the time have come for the manifestation of the sons of God to all of creation! Then will the creature itself be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God! Then will the time have come for the kingdoms of this world to become the kingdoms of our lord and His Christ! Then will come peace on earth and good toward men!

In Heb. 6:1,2, the apostle Paul lays out for us the foundation doctrines of the Christian faith. We read...

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ let us go on to perfection; not laying the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of **the resurrection of the dead,** and of eternal judgment.

We note that while the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is included, the doctrine of the rapture is conspicuously absent

In Heb. 6:1, the exhortation of Paul is to let us go unto perfection! As we have seen, the clear teaching of scripture is perfection is realized in Christ by resurrection, not by rapture! This is the teaching of the early church fathers is clear not only in scriptures that we have looked at but also in Acts 17:16- 18.

Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he say the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this Babblers say? Other some, he seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: Because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

Acts 24:14, 15, we read...

But this I confess unto thee, that after the way they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.

In Ro. 1:3, we read that Jesus was declared to be the Son with power, according to the spirit of holiness. How? **By resurrection from the dead!**

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen (He. 13;20-21)