

# The Old-Time Evangelistic News

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Are You Ready for the Rapture? (Part 9)

I Thessalonians 4:13-18

Last month we finished with a few thoughts about The Splendor of the Rapture. The first aspect of that splendor is the *Resurrection of the Bodies of Dead Saints*. Throughout Scripture we see a foretaste of the resurrection of the saints. In the Old Testament three bodies were raised—one by Elijah and two by Elisha. Elijah raised up the widow's son in I Kings 17:17-24. Elisha raised the Shunammite's son in II Kings 4:18-37. Later, after Elisha had died, a soldier's dead body was hurriedly thrown into the tomb where Elisha's body had been laid. Upon touching Elisha's bones, the dead soldier "*revived, and stood up on his feet*" (II Kings 13:20-21).

While Jesus was upon this earth, he raised three people back to life. Three gospels record the raising of Jairus's daughter. It is found in Matthew 9, Mark 5, and Luke 8. Luke records him raising the son of the widow of Nain in Luke 7:11-18. Christ's final raising of a dead person is recorded in John 11. There he raises Lazarus who had been dead four days. The words in John 11:43-44 thrill my soul every time I read it. The verses say, "*And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.*" Jesus had complete power over death. What is our greatest enemy is no match for Him. Jesus commanded Lazarus to come forth and "*he that was dead came forth.*" Death could not keep Lazarus in the grave when Jesus commanded him to come forth. What power there is in the voice of Christ!

In Matthew 27:52-53, we find another record of the resurrection of the bodies of dead saints. The verses say, "*And the graves were*

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*opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.*" I believe this is a record of the resurrection of the Old Testament saints. Although the word many is used, I believe it is an inclusive term, and all of the Old Testament saints were raised at the time of Christ's resurrection and ascended to Heaven with Him at His ascension. Some would argue against this interpretation and say that it was not all of the Old Testament saints. That is fine, but I believe that all of them were raised. They tarried around Jerusalem for forty days until Christ ascended. The resurrection of these saints provides even more hope for us. If the Old Testament saints were all raised at one time, then you and I can fully expect what is described in I Corinthians 15 and I Thessalonians 4 to be fulfilled.

Two other resurrections occurred in the book of Acts. Peter raised Dorcas in Acts 9:36-43. The final person raised back to life was Eutychus. He fell asleep while Paul was preaching and fell out of a window from the third loft. He was taken up for dead, but Paul restored his life (Acts 20:6-12).

All of these resurrections provide great hope for you and me. Although we may die, we have the promise of Scripture that we will rise again. Although our family members or friends may die, we have the promise of Scripture that they will rise again. Death is our enemy, but it has been conquered by Christ. In all of these resurrections, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, it is clear that God has power to bring back to life those that have died. When Christ shouts and the trumpet sounds, the dead in Christ will come out of the grave. That is what Paul calls the "*blessed hope*" in Titus 2:13. Our loved one may die; we may die; but we have the hope—the confident expectation—that every believer will be raised from the dead.

The second aspect of the Splendor of the Rapture is the *Rising of the Bodies of Dwelling Saints*. The dead in Christ will be resurrected,

but those alive at the time of the Rapture will not be ignored. I Thessalonians 4:17 says, *“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.”* Many scoffers have mocked this verse and ridiculed those that believe it. Let them mock and ridicule. I believe it will happen exactly as it says. When Jesus shouts and the trumpet sounds, as soon as the dead are raised and start coming out of their graves, those that are still alive will start to rise as well. We may not be able to jump far off the ground right now, but gravity will not have any control over us any more. One may be aged and not able to do much physical activity. That will not be a problem. Their body will be changed. Notice the words of Philippians 3:20-21—*“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 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.”* The word vile is describing our natural body. It is not talking about the sinfulness of it, but just the naturalness of the body in that it grows weak, old, and feeble. Of course, that is a result of sin, but it is not focusing on the sin, just the natural weakness of the body. However, when Christ shouts and the trumpet sounds, our natural body will be changed. It will be changed into a glorious, supernatural body just like Christ’s. Paul also described this change in the verses that we mentioned last month in I Corinthians 15:53-54. His focus there is on the dead bodies being raised, but the change that takes place is true for the living believer as well. Both the dead that are raised and the living that will begin to rise will change from a corruptible body to an incorruptible body. What a glorious hope we have! One day the trumpet will sound, and we will be gone! We should pray as John did in Revelation 22:20—*“Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”*

We now come to the last part of the message. Having seen The Expressions of the Rapture, The Evidence for a Pre-tribulation Rapture, and The Elements of the Rapture, we now consider **The Events after the Rapture**. The Rapture is a glorious event that every

believer should excitedly look forward to. However, there will be a time of sober inspection after the Rapture. When we ascend to Heaven, there will be great rejoicing. But then Christ will begin The Judging. How long that will be after we get to Heaven, the Bible does not say. I do not think it will be long time. But at the appropriate time, we will be commanded to appear at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

No one passage describes the Judgment Seat of Christ in complete detail. We can understand it only as we compare Scripture with Scripture. Two passages in the New Testament record the phrase. One other passage does not use that phrase, but the details given in those verses describe what will take place at the Judgment Seat. Other passages refer to the rewards that are given at the Judgment Seat. We will look at many of these verses, so we can be prepared for the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Romans 14:10 says, *“But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.”* II Corinthians 5:10 says, *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”* This judgment is not to determine who goes to Heaven or who goes to Hell. That is determined by your acceptance or rejection of Christ on the earth while you are still living. The Bible does not teach a judgment where saved and unsaved are being judged at the same time. The Bible teaches this judgment of believers where they are rewarded for their service, and it also teaches the Great White Throne Judgment in Revelation 20:11-15. At that judgment only unbelievers will stand before God. Because their name will not be found in the Book of Life, they will be cast into the Lake of Fire for all of eternity. This Judgment Seat of Christ is for all believers. They will be rewarded for their faithfulness in their service to Christ.

I Corinthians 3:12-15 describes the rewarding or non-rewarding

of believers. The verses say, “ *Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*” This passage does not use the phrase Judgment Seat of Christ, but it does use some words similar to II Corinthians 5:10. I Corinthians 3:13 says, “*Every man's work shall be made manifest.*” II Corinthians 5:10 says, “*For we must all appear.*” The words “*made manifest*” and “*appear*” mean the same thing. II Corinthians is focusing on the person, and I Corinthians is focusing on the works. The end of II Corinthians 5:10 talks about receiving something based upon what the believer has done. I Corinthians 3:12-15 describes the quality of work that a believer performs. If it is lasting and valuable to Christ, it is described as gold, silver, and precious stones. If it is not valuable to Christ, it is wood, hay, and stubble. The basis of whether the work is valuable or not is whether it is done for Christ or for self. If it is for Christ, it will be rewarded. We will describe those rewards next month.