

The RAPTURE or the TRANSLATION OF THE CHURCH, the purpose of it, the consequences of it and whether it will be pre, mid or post tribulational.

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[0 : 00] Thank you.

And for each one here today to partake of it. We commit our time to you in the thanksgiving. In the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen. This is not going to be terribly new material to grace believers.

Because most of us are fairly well familiar with the subject called the rapture of the church. And there are two passages in particular that deal with it more thoroughly than any other passages in scripture.

These are not the only places where the translation of the body of Christ is referred to. Sometimes just in passing. But these two passages give us more in-depth information regarding the event.

And what is going to take place than any other portion of scripture. So I would direct your attention please to page 1, 1 Corinthians chapter 15.

[1 : 23] And the page you are holding. Which by the way we provided just as a convenience. Because I know you have limited space on the table with dishes and glasses and cups and all of that.

So you are more than welcome to operate right out of your own Bible if you want. But this kind of simplifies it. And the sheet that you have before you is a photocopy from the 26th translation New Testament.

Which I regret to tell you has been out of print for a long time. And it is not now available. So I have taken the liberty of photocopying some of these pages.

And when it says it is from the 26th translation. It means that 26 different translations of the New Testament are incorporated in this particular book.

It doesn't mean that it contains all 26. All it means is in each of these 26 translations where there is any appreciable difference at all in the way the text is rendered.

[2 : 33] They include it. But very often there may be 15 or 20 of the 26 texts that translate it exactly the same way.

So there is no point in repeating all of those. So they just include those that have a significant difference. And that gives us a much broader understanding I think of the context.

Because where one of these translations may not connect with you, another may speak volumes. And that's the beauty of having multiple translations at hand. And then of course you will note that each verse begins with bold print, bold type.

That's the King James translation of 1611. And then the others and their abbreviation that follows may or may not be familiar to you. But it is to me and I can tell you what it is if anybody wants to know.

So let's drop down if we may. Near the bottom of the left hand column on 1 Corinthians 15 page 1. Where the apostle begins with the comment, behold.

[3 : 39] And the word behold, of course, is utilized because he is making an effort to garner some additional attention.

He is using this expression as we would say, now look here. Or listen up. He is introducing a new theme.

And he wants to grab the attention's reader so that their focus will be magnified. And they will really latch on to what he is saying. So he says, behold, I show you a mystery.

And it is important to note here when Paul says, I. We ought not to take this personally. This isn't Paul's mystery. He is the chosen one of God to reveal this mystery.

But it doesn't originate with him. He is the vehicle or the intermediary. And he is going to relate to these people in Corinth information that they did not have prior to his revealing it.

[4 : 47] Some translations render this. In fact, the very first one, Berkeley says, take notice. I am telling you a secret. That's probably the best definition of the word mystery.

Mysterion in the Greek means, it doesn't mean something that can't be known. That's what we tend to think of a mystery as being, a conundrum or a puzzle. Something that can't be known.

A biblical mystery means something that was not known previously and would never be known if it were not for the fact that someone who had the information on the mystery divulged it.

Otherwise, you wouldn't even know it existed to be a mystery. It is a completely new disclosure, hitherto, not known, understood, appreciated, revealed at all.

Everybody was completely in the dark about this. And what that means, of course, is this is not a subject that is found in the scriptures prior to this time.

[5 : 57] This is new truth, hitherto unrevealed. You will not find the rapture or anything about it in the Old Testament.

It is not prophesied. That's what makes it a mystery. This is new information. And it's really important to pick up on this. And folks, I've got a bone to pick here with a lot of men of the cloth.

When Paul says, I show you a mystery, I hope you will forever divorce from your mind the thinking. Well, this is just Paul.

That's nonsense. Paul is the vehicle. Paul is the go-between. He is the communicator. But he is not the originator. He is the one whom God has chosen to disclose this information.

But it is information that Paul would not have had had not God revealed it to him. And we don't know exactly when that took place. But we know there was a lengthy period of time that Paul spent in Arabia in the backside of the desert receiving an abundance of revelations that were communicated to him that were not given to anyone else.

[7 : 13] And Paul is the revealer of it. So, don't let anyone sell you on the nonsense. Well, yeah, Paul talks about this rapture. But after all, Jesus didn't talk about it.

Well, the reason our Lord Jesus didn't talk about it was because it was not timely for him to talk about it. But that doesn't mean that he did not reveal it to Paul because he did.

And you see, Christ is the source of all this information. In the same way that he was the source of what Moses communicated to the children of Israel when they came out of Egypt.

It wasn't Moses' ideas. It wasn't something Moses thought of. All he did was relate to the people what God related to him. So, I want you to think in terms of Paul and the New Testament and the New Covenant being in a comparable position to the church, which is the body of Christ, as Moses was to Israel as a nation.

Both of them were primary communicators or go-betweens. So, Paul said, I am showing you or telling you a secret. 20th century says, listen, I will tell you God's hidden purpose.

[8 : 34] We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. And immediately, this word sleep needs to be understood. This is a euphemism for dying.

Remember when Lazarus passed away and our Lord said to the disciples, our friend Lazarus sleepeth. And they said, well, if he sleeps, that's good.

And they thought Jesus was talking about literal sleep, which would be reparative and restorative to the body for whatever illness he had. If he's sleeping, that's good.

And then Jesus came back and said, no, Lazarus is dead. And he used the word sleep as a common euphemism, as is found many times in the New Testament. So, when he is saying here, we shall not all sleep, we shall all be changed, Moffat renders it, not all of us are to die.

We're not all going to experience a physical death. Taylor says, we shall all be given new bodies. And TCNT is the abbreviation for the 20th century New Testament renders it, but we shall all be transformed.

[9 : 48] And the all here has to be kept in its context. Paul is not talking about every living human being. He's talking about believers. This all is confined to those who are in the body of Christ.

And when he says, I show you a mystery, he is talking to believers. And that's made, I think, very clear at the outset of his introduction to this Corinthian epistle.

We shall all be transformed. We're not all going to experience physical death, but we all, including those who have died, as well as those who have not died, one thing they have in common.

Some have died, some haven't died, but they're all going to be changed. And there will not be any exceptions to that. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead, and the dead here, it's the same ones he is referring to in the previous verse when he says, sleep, the dead shall be raised incorruptible.

So, we do not know what kind of time frame this is, but when the scriptures say, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, someone asked me, how long is the twinkle of an eye?

[11 : 20] I don't know that it's ever been timed, but I have reason to believe it is shorter than a blink. A twinkle.

I'm not sure what a twinkle is of the eye, but I've heard the expression that I knew your mother and father when you were just a twinkle in their eye.

It's a pretty nice way to put it, isn't it? Yeah. Yeah. And romance and love took over. Well, the twinkling of an eye is, someone said, probably the equivalent of a nanosecond, which is pretty hard to register.

Now we've got things down. If you ever watch the Olympic competition, you know, and you see that clock running, they're not satisfied with tenths of a second. They've got hundredths of a second.

And some races and contests have been won or lost on a hundredth of a second, like a downhill ski or something like that.

[12 : 22] It's incredible. So we're talking about a pretty short period of time. In fact, when this happens, it is going to be so quick, so sudden, you won't even realize it.

You are just going to, like that, be transformed, be changed. I don't know if they're going to stand there and look at yourself up and down and say, what? What? What? What happened?

What? What's going on? But it's going to be instantaneous. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible.

This, I shared with a group not long ago. Let's be honest, folks. This really sounds pretty fanciful.

Doesn't it? Pinch yourself. The graves being opened, the dead being raised, incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

[13 : 34] Phillips says, we who are still alive shall suddenly be utterly changed. How so?

Well, for starters, this corruptible must put on incorruption. corruption. Our bodies, our physical bodies, are subject to corruption.

They begin corrupting when the spirit leaves the body. James says, the body without the spirit is dead.

You are now alive, but when your spirit leaves, instantaneously, the process of decay and corruption sets in.

and you are beyond help. All we can do is embalm you, get the mortician and his cosmetic kit out and put some makeup on you so that everybody's able to look at you and say, my, doesn't he look nice?

[14 : 40] you know, but the life is gone and corruption is set in and you are beyond help. All we can do is cremate you or put you in the ground because you can no longer dwell among us.

You are corrupted. We are all like that. These bodies subject to corruption are going to put on incorruption.

that means you and I are going to get an extreme makeover that you won't believe.

I don't know how that's going to affect things like baldness, hair loss, loss of teeth. I don't, I suspect that we are going to be made the way we ought to be and it's going to be quite a transformation.

It's going to be incredible. I know people have questions like, what about babies? Are they always going to be babies? What about, you know, what's the age? If we are in our 80s when we die, are we going to be in our 80s throughout eternity?

[15 : 53] I haven't a clue. The scriptures just, we can't help but wonder about those things. We're all curious about, but we just don't know. So all I know is, look at it this way, your body and my body is going to be as good and as transformed as God can make it.

Is that good enough? I think that will suffice. This corruptible must put on incorruption. That means a body that will be free, the basic English says, a body that will be made free from the power of death.

Williams says, for this decaying part of us must put on the body that can never decay. That's the kind of body that Jesus Christ had when he came out of the tomb.

It's called a glorified body. No longer subject to death, decay, or anything else. And this mortal, a body which is capable of dying, must put on immortality.

So then, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then, not before, not now, not today, but then, when these things happen, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory.

[17 : 26] I don't think I have ever had a funeral or a graveside service where I have not used this passage or the one from 1 Thessalonians because nothing speaks with such authority and such comforting words to those left behind as these two passages.

Death now is the victor. We need to face that reality. death is not swallowed up in victory now.

We are. Aren't we? Sure we are. We are all subject unto death. Now, it's true for believers we are absent from the body present with the Lord, so death does not have that stranglehold on us, but it still severely impacts our physical body.

Death is swallowed up in victory, but that's not now, that's future. We have the promise of it. Christ is the first fruits of them that slept and we have the promise that because he lives, we too shall live.

But we also know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain until now, waiting to wait for the redemption of the body, manifestation of the sons of God, the redemption of the body.

[18 : 49] And we've made a point in the past that our bodies are not redeemed. That's why they still die. Our spirit is redeemed.

That's why it is free to be joined with the Lord when we are absent from the body. We are present with the Lord. But that's not your body. That's your spirit. And the body is disposed of.

But this passage is talking about a time when that spirit that inhabits the body is taken from it, the body experiences death, and there's going to be a reunion of the spirit that departed this corruptible body, back into and be infused again into this new incorruptible body that is immortal, just like the body of Christ.

Then we'll be come to pass the saying, death is swallowed up in victory. And he is saying here in a mocking kind of way, oh death, where is thy sting?

It's a beautiful poetic way whereby he is addressing death as though it were personified and he's saying, so what do you think of that, death? How do you like them apples?

[20 : 09] You are not going to be the victor in the end. Now where is your sting? Now where is your victory? You talk big and you took millions to the grave, but now you have to give them up.

And now you, death, you are swallowed up in victory. It's going to be a glorious time when that happens. I tell you, the sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law.

But, thanks be to God, what a big three letter word, but, thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, and the word therefore always means, in light of what I have just said, taking into consideration what we have just talked about.

So then, therefore, ergo, my beloved brethren, be you steadfast, hang in there, unmovable, don't be shaken, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

[21 : 21] Philip says, as you busy yourselves, Goodspeed says, always devote yourselves. New English Bible, and work for the Lord always, work without limit.

Berkeley renders it, at all times aboundingly active in the Lord's service. Why? Why? Because, as ye know, that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

That's another way of saying, folks, this life doesn't end at all. There are consequences on the other side. Therefore, apply yourselves to what you can for the Lord in this life.

Because, what you do is not for nothing. It counts for eternity. So, give it your best shot.

And, don't quit. It's always too soon to quit. Hang in there. Keep plugging away. When you've reached the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on.

[22 : 32] That's what he's saying. because, there is going to be a time of reckoning after this. This is our basis for motivation. This life is not what it's all about.

This is not the end of it. There is something on the other side. And, the something on the other side, and I think the level to which we are going to enjoy it, will be linked to our productivity here.

And, it will count for a lot. Now, on the other page, and I want to get through this if we can, we've got a similar passage that deals with the same issue.

I probably should have mentioned this at the outset. There are really two basic issues that surround the teaching of the rapture of the church, or the translation of the church, or the hatching away of the body of Christ, whatever you want to call it.

And, the two principal issues that surround this matter in Christendom is, first of all, whether this is ever going to be, whether this is what it means, whether this catching up is something that is actually put forth here, or whether it's something else.

[23 : 48] And, if it's something else, I have no idea what else it is. So, even though most believers don't disagree on whether there will be a rapture, they do strongly disagree on when it will be, the timing of it.

And, they are principally divided into three groups, and they're very easy to remember. They are referred to as pre-trib, mid-trib, post-trib.

Pre-tribulational rapture simply says that Christ is coming for the church, the passage we just read in 1 Corinthians and that we will undergo here in 1 Thessalonians, this content is going to take place prior to the time of the tribulation.

That's prior to the time of the 70th week of Daniel. That means it is pre-trib rapture. Mid-trib, folks, and by the way, let me insert this.

This has nothing to do with anybody's salvation. Good people who know and love the Lord honestly disagree on these issues, but it's not going to keep anybody out of heaven.

[25 : 07] All of us are wrong on some things. We just don't know what all those things are, and when you study, you're supposed to be looking for them, so that you can find where you're wrong and change your position.

But this has nothing to do with anybody's love for the Lord or sincerity or anything else. This is just honest Christian people who see the issues differently.

Personally, I think the only plausible argument is for a pre-tribulation rapture, but I have some good friends who don't agree with me, and I tell them that when we get there, they will see that I was right.

I will accept their apology then. Meanwhile, we just keep plugging away. Those who are of the mid-trib position believe that through the 70th week of Daniel, and we'll be talking about that perhaps in our next session if we get this covered, this is the seven-year period, the 70th week of Daniel, that the Lord will return in the middle of the tribulation period, that is halfway through, and that the first half of the tribulation period refers to the wrath of man and the wrath of Satan.

The last half of the tribulation period refers to the wrath of God, and they believe that it is that wrath from which believers are delivered, but that the church will be here for the first half of the tribulation period, and it will be a pretty hairy place to be.

[26 : 34] And then, of course, there are those, and I call these the ping-pong, or the yo-yo rapture. They believe that Christ will come at the end of the tribulation period for the church, and then he's going to come back again for the second coming.

So it's going to be just an up-and-down-again thing, which I don't think has a whole lot of merit, but there are those who adhere to this, and these are good people. They are post-rapture. They believe Christ is coming at the end of the tribulation period.

So you're not really, with mid-trib, you're saved from half of the tribulation. With post-trib, you go through the whole thing, but with pre-trib, we are removed before it even begins.

And there are those who say that this is a position of escapism for those who are in the body of Christ.

They don't like to think in terms of being subjected to the rapture, so they insist that Christ removes us before the tribulation period starts, so we don't have to go through that.

[27 : 37] And their point is, the church needs to go through the tribulation period in order for it to be purified.

Well, I can't argue that it needs purification, but at the same time, you've got to understand that in Christ, there is a purification of the body that has already taken place by virtue of the position that we have by being in union with Christ.

You realize you have a perfect standing with God if you are in Christ. That is your position.

It cannot be improved upon. It is complete, it's final, it's over and done, because it is predicated upon the finished work of Christ, not upon your performance.

as a Christian. So, you are positionally perfect in Christ. There is nothing on the record against you.

[28 : 48] We all know that our practice, our behavior, our decorum, our attitude, our orneriness, and meanness, and nastiness that sometimes Christians are capable of, there is nothing perfect about that.

That's why we still have room to grow. You cannot grow in your position. Christ established that you are complete in him, but you can grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus, and that's what we are all committed to doing.

So, there is room for improvement in that. we do not believe that the body of Christ is going to be removed before the tribulation because we somehow deserve to be protected from that.

That's nonsense. if you are in Christ, you already know what you deserve. Don't you? You already know what you deserve.

It's not a pleasant picture. So, we are not going to be removed on the basis that we are so wonderful and deserving that God doesn't want us to go through that.

[30 : 03] Well, that's just not the case. We are going to be removed because this is what the prophetic scheme calls for and simply because I believe this is what the word teaches and it has nothing to do with the church wanting to escape.

Of course we want to escape. You'd be crazy if you didn't want to escape. That's only logical. But that doesn't mean that that's the basis for it. We are going to escape because it is an item of his grace and of his timing.

God has not appointed us to wrath but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus. And that means rescue or deliverance. So we are going to be removed.

And I'm not going to deal too much with the partial rapture but there is a position called the partial rapture theory and it posits the idea that believers who are worthy and living and walking in the spirit and living for the Lord, they will be taken and the Christian scoundrels who ought to have known better but weren't producing are going to be left behind and boy they're going to be sorry.

So that's the partial rapture theory and I don't give any credence to that but let's look at the Thessalonian epistle now if we may because this affords the basis of our consolation and Paul begins in verse 13 by saying I would not have you to be ignorant brethren and that simply means that he's going to give them a heads up so that they will know something concerning those who are asleep.

[31 : 40] What has happened? These people are wondering. What has happened to my loved one that have passed on? Where are they now? Well, we buried them.

Well, I know we buried their body but where is the real person? What happened to them? And this is what Paul is going to address. He says those who are asleep and again, that's the death thing.

Those who have passed to their rest. Taylor renders it what happens to a Christian when he dies. And the reason I do not want you to be informed, that I want you to be informed is so that you will sorrow not even as others which have no hope.

And we've often made the distinction here. Paul isn't saying I'm telling you this so that you won't sorrow. Not saying that at all. He's saying I know you're going to sorrow. sorrow. And there's nothing wrong with sorrow.

When a loved one has been torn from you in death and you're powerless to do anything about it and you grieve over their passing. Is it okay if you are a Christian?

[32 : 46] Is it okay to sorrow? Absolutely. You sorrow with a sorrow that is inexpressible. And some of you know what I'm talking about. You cannot begin to put into words this kind of sorrow.

sorrow. But it does not compare with the kind of sorrow that people have who have no hope. For those who are not in Christ or loved ones who are in Christ, the pain must be excruciating beyond words.

It is bad enough when you know where they are. It is painful enough under those circumstances. But for those who have no hope, it's incredible.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and we are in union with him, even so, them also which sleep in Jesus, or those who died and were in Christ when they died, God will bring with him.

Where are they? They are where he is. They are where he is now. I don't know much about heaven, except it is other worldly.

[34 : 11] And I don't know much about eternity, except it is the absence of time. It is not time prolonged. It is no time.

I cannot get my feeble brain around that. But wherever the Lord is, that is where these loved ones who have died are.

They are with him. In heaven, in eternity, and whatever that involves that we do not understand in this life. God will bring them with him.

What is he bringing them with them for? And what is he bringing with them? two possibilities here, and I don't want to muddy the water, and I've got to give you both of them because I don't know which one is right.

There is a possibility that those who have departed this life and are with Christ are with him in spirit only as a disembodied spirit.

[35 : 13] spirit. We cannot conceive of a spirit without a body. Why? Because a body is all we know. This has been our only place of residence, our only frame of reference.

We cannot begin to comprehend an existence of our person without this physical body. but it does exist.

And it is that which vacates the body at death to go to be with the Lord. There is a possibility that this disembodied spirit is now with the Lord in that spirit form.

What does it look like? It doesn't look like anything because it isn't physical. physical. How can you see it? You can't see it because it isn't physical.

We are talking about the existence of spirituality in eternity. And in eternity there is no time. What would millions of disembodied spirits look like?

[36 : 29] It wouldn't look like anything because you can't see it. So what are we talking about? I haven't a clue. We don't know. This is just otherworldly.

I don't know. There is also the possibility because this is interacting with the eternal state there is also a distinct possibility that upon the death of the believer they receive a glorified body immediately.

and it is that glorified body that is in the presence of the Lord with his glorified body. Then what about the body that's in the ground?

The only thing I can suggest is the body that's in the ground is subject to time and space. the glorified body is not.

And when you try to marry eternity with time and space it won't work. They don't mix. So there is very possibly something else going on there. A connecting link that we don't understand cannot appreciate in this life.

[37 : 40] So I just don't have the answer to that but we'll have time for Q&A; and if you've got the answer I'll be all ears. This we say unto you by the word of the Lord.

That means Paul is quoting his authority. He's making it clear. Folks I want you to understand this isn't my idea. Please don't attribute this to me with the idea.

Well Paul says and you know believers do this all the time. They pit Paul against Peter and John and even the Lord and so on. I want to make a case for this again because it is so critical.

The writers of scripture are many. The author is one. The spirit of God has communicated the word to various and sundry writers over that period of 1500 years but the point of origin and authorship is always the same.

Whether Moses wrote it, whether Paul wrote it, John wrote it, Luke wrote it, Ezra wrote it, doesn't make any difference. They are just human instrumentalities. The point of origin is the same.

[38 : 51] The authority is in the author. The author is one, the writers are many. God utilized human instrumentality to write his word, to give it a human flavor, to communicate with humans and it is a beautiful thing.

So Paul makes it very clear, this is not our idea, we say this unto you by the word of the Lord. This we tell you on the authority of the Lord, that we which are alive, living at the time, and remain into the coming of the Lord, and we tend to think that it may be this generation, it may be six or sixteen generations yet future.

We don't know. We wonder sometimes how can this world go on as it is without imploding. we wonder, but it's gone on for a long time.

Shall not prevent, this is an unfortunate King James rendering, you see the word prevent really means precede, or go before. Shall in no wise gain an advantage over those who fell asleep or those who died.

The Amplified says, shall in no way proceed into his presence or have any advantage at all over those who have previously fallen asleep in him in death. For, the Lord himself, personally, Jesus Christ, in the flesh, shall descend from heaven with a shout.

[40 : 23] I have no idea what that's going to sound like. But someone has likened it to, every believer will hear it, every unbeliever will hear nothing.

It'll just be like a divine dog whistle. Only the Lord won't be calling dogs. He'll be calling saints. And only those who are attuned to his call will hear his call.

And others will probably hear nothing. But when that time comes, and the trump of God, the dead in Christ shall rise first.

I just cannot imagine what that's going to be like, but it's going to be something. Do you have any idea how many people are dead in cemeteries all over the world?

How many were buried at sea? The sea will give up the dead which are in it, we're told later in Revelation. It's going to be an incredible thing. I don't know how that's going to work, but I do know this.

[41 : 32] God has got a fix on every human being's DNA. And it will be no problem for him to put it together. He put it together in the beginning, didn't he?

We are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds. And you might want to underline the little word caught up because it's the word from which the word rapture comes.

It isn't obvious at all in English. Actually, it isn't even obvious in the Greek. But Jerome in the 4th century, he was a Roman Catholic cleric, St.

Jerome, copied the, translated the Greek New Testament into Latin. And the word that he used for caught up in his Latin translation is the word raptō, R-A-P-T-O.

and the English word from raptō is rapture. And that's where that expression came from. It means to be caught up. The series left behind that Jerry Jenkins and Tim LaHaye did was a phenomenal publication undertaking.

[42 : 50] I mean, it just broke all existing records. And it stimulated a lot of interest in this because the left behind, refers to those who do not hear the sound of the trumpet and who are not in Christ and who are not caught up.

They are those left behind. And in the 1970s, some of you aren't even old enough to remember this, but in the 1970s, a man by the name of Hal Lindsey came on the stage and he wrote a book called The Late Great Planet Earth.

And it became the bestseller of the decade, of the 70s. And in it he has a chapter on the rapture.

I thought it was kind of humorous. The title of this chapter was called The Great Snatch. And that's exactly what it is. It's a catching away. A great snatch whereby God is going to remove from the earth instantaneously all those who are in Christ.

And I don't know if this is going to be like it was depicted in Left Behind, or you saw the movie, or read the book, and here is this airliner in the sky, and there are believers in these seats, and all at once there's nothing there but a pile of clothes.

[44 : 04] And they're gone. Because they were changed into an incorruptible body, and they just vacated the clothing they were in and left it behind.

I don't know how accurate that is, but I'm not prepared to challenge it, because I don't have a better answer. And someone has suggested the possibility that these are only going to appear to have been taken like that, but what is actually going to happen is that all of these people are going to die physically.

And they aren't going to leave a pile of clothes behind at all, they're going to leave their bodies behind. Well, we say, well, what in the world could possibly account for all of these people all over the world, selectively, dying?

How do you explain all of these corpses left behind? What killed them? I don't know. Maybe that's not the way it is. Maybe there is a pile of clothing left.

Maybe there is a driverless vehicle left, or a pilotless plane. Maybe that's the way it's going to be. We aren't given those kind of details. We just don't know. But there is a possibility of some kind of nuclear activity, some kind of germ warfare, where certain people would be susceptible to it, others would not be susceptible to it.

[45 : 31] Some phenomenal thing like that may happen. After all, the book of Revelation does make quite clear that the loss of life during the tribulation, which is after this, is going to number not in the millions, but in the billions.

And of late, we haven't had as much difficulty dealing with numbers like billions ever since our Congress has gotten in the act and started talking in terms of trillions.

So I don't know. These are unanswered questions. But we do know that the dead in Christ are going to rise and we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

He is not coming to the earth for the rapture. He is coming above the earth. He comes to the earth in the second coming and his feet will land on the Mount of Olives, the very place from which he was taken up in Acts 1.

He's coming back to that. But not this time. He comes in the clouds above the earth. We are caught up to meet him in the air. I've always had a little problem with this with my fear of height.

[46 : 56] But if you've got a glorified body, it's just going to be a major wow. You won't be worried about the height. You won't be worried about falling. You won't be worried about anything. We are going to be with him to meet the Lord in the end.

So shall we ever be with the Lord? That's what makes heaven heaven. With him.

Wherever that is, if you're with him, that's heaven. And Paul's conclusion to this is this. Now folks, in light of all of this, doesn't that do something for you?

don't you find some comfort, consolation in that? The Corinthian passage is motivation. Therefore, be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Get with it. Keep hitting the ball. But this is consolation. This is comfort. This is our solace. This we can take to heart.

[48 : 04] This provides us with the ability, coupled with the Corinthian passage, to not give up, to hang in there, and keep on keeping on. And we don't know when this is going to take place, but I want to close with this important, I guess you would call it an important insistence, and that is, it is imminent.

It could happen before I finish the next sentence. It could take place at any time. There is nothing that yet needs to be fulfilled before this snatching away can take place.

And people who think so usually confuse the rapture with the second coming. And they say things like, well, the gospel has to be preached in the whole world first before Christ can come.

That's true. true. And that's made very clear in Matthew 24 and 25. The gospel will be preached in the whole earth before the Lord returns.

But that's the second coming, not the rapture. That will take place during the tribulation period, largely through the influence of the 144,000.

[49 : 20] And that will make an enormous impact. So I would urge you to seriously consider the distinction between the rapture and the second advent that is here on this page. And that will be very, very helpful to you, I'm sure, as you try to work your way through this even more than what we have done here this morning.

So, comments or questions? Anyone? Feel free. Yes, Marie? Have you come to the conclusion in your studies that in 2 Thessalonians 2-3 that the falling away is a rapture, and not apostasy?

I don't know. I bet on both sides of that issue. I really don't know. I don't know. The falling away, as Marie pointed out, falling away could mean the falling away from the faith, a departure from the faith, and it could also have reference to the rapture.

But there are good people on both sides of the issue. I wish I could be more dogmatic. Some people think I'm dogmatic about everything, but I'm not.

I mean, there are so many things I don't know for sure. people. And you know, the funny thing about it is, when I was younger, I used to know all this. I had all these answers, and I don't know what happened to them, but it's amazing how sometimes someone said, when you get older, you mature in Christ, you tend to believe more and more about less and less.

[51 : 04] I can see that. Fewer things become really important to you, but those things become more important than ever. John? We shall all be changed.

We'll put on incorruptible. We'll put on immortality. Would the transfiguration where Moses and Elijah and Christ are on the mount, would that be the same where Moses was transfigured as putting on incorruption?

Well, Moses and Elijah had some form to their being that Peter, James, and John apparently were able to recognize.

Now, I don't know, because the text doesn't say, the text tells us that Moses and Elijah were there. This is in the account of the transfiguration when the Lord went into the mount with three of the twelve, Peter, James, and John.

We do not know whether Peter, James, and John looked at these two men and said, well, golly, there's Moses and Elijah. Whether they were able to just recognize them right off, or whether our Lord said, Peter, James, and John, I'd like you to meet Moses and Elijah.

[52 : 29] Longtime friends of mine. And they all shook hands and had a little meeting. We don't know. We aren't given the details about that. But it seems that they had an identifiable or at least some kind of physical presence.

And it may be that that is an indicator. That's probably as good an indicator as we have, John. They're in the transfiguration because whatever they had been transformed into, they already had.

And that may very well be a foretaste of what we're going to experience. Good question. Good comment. Thank you. Someone else. The food is here. Anybody else? Yes.

What is your basis for only believers hearing the shout? Well, I would say my basis for only believers hearing the shout is that Paul identifies them in the context there.

Those who believe in Christ at that time. Verse, let's see, what am I talking about here? Verse 15, we which are alive remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not present them.

[53 : 39] No, I'm sorry. Verse 14 establishes the context that he's talking about those who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. We believe that he died, rose again.

The context there makes it quite clear that he's limiting himself to those in the audience who are believers. And therefore, it would seem that they would be the only ones in tune of the shall.

But there is a possibility that others could hear it too, just wouldn't know what it is, or be able to recognize it, or respond to it. That's a possibility. Yeah, possibility. John? The all, you kind of selected and said it was only the all in Christ, not the all world.

Right. But now, doesn't the all world have to have a change in their life to be able to enter the pit and suffer eternity?

I'm sorry, I'm not understanding your question. Repeat the question. Okay. In Revelations, it talks about all unbelievers entering the pit and suffering eternally.

[55 : 04] So don't they have to have some kind of a change? A physical body can't suffer eternally. Right. Okay. Okay. Excellent point.

Excellent point. What kind of physical composition do unbelievers have when they are placed in the lake of fire? God forbid. That's the depiction that is used in Revelation.

It will obviously not be a body like this. Otherwise, it would just be completely consumed. I wouldn't go so far as to say they're going to have a glorified body because I tend to think of that in a very positive supernatural effect.

But it is hard to believe that that kind of body is going to be provided with unbelievers. However, it would seem that they're going to have some kind of a supernatural physical body different from this that will be able to experience that.

And you can tie that in with the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16. And I'm not sure how much that comes into play, but there's a good possibility. So there's something there that we don't understand.

[56 : 13] God has a lot of prerogatives other than this physical body that we know. And I'm sure that's going to come into play. Good question, though. Food is here, and thank you all very much for being here today.

I appreciate your presence.