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THE CHURCH AND THE END TIMES

as heard over

✓ THE BIBLE INSTITUTE HOUR

558 South Hope Street
Los Angeles 17, California

FOUR IMPORTANT
BIBLE THEMES

THE RAPTURE

by Dr. CHARLES L. FEINBERG

Director of the
Talbot Theological Seminary

THE RESURRECTIONS AND JUDGMENTS

by Dr. ARTHUR B. WHITING

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Talbot Theological Seminary

THE TRIBULATION

by Dr. GERALD B. STANTON

Professor of Systematic Theology,
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THE MILLENNIUM

by Dr. LOUIS T. TALBOT

Chancellor,
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n/c

THE RAPTURE

DR. C. L. FEINBERG

We want to place before us immediately the meaning of the word "church." It was a wise professor at Harvard who said to his students, "Look well to your definitions." By the church, we mean the body of individuals who have put faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and Redeemer from sin ever since Pentecost to this hour. This is what we mean by the "church" — redeemed Jews and Gentiles who through no merit of their own, but by the merit of Christ, His finished work on Calvary, have come into a knowledge of God and of His grace.

By the rapture of the church, we mean the catching away of the church. In I Thessalonians 4, we read, "And we shall be caught up." The Latin for the word *caught up* is the verb, *raptos* or *rapture*. The rapture of the church is an eminently Scriptural concept. In the Vulgate, the Latin translation of the New Testament, the word *caught up* is that Latin verb, *raptos*. And the catching up of the church or the rapture of the church is taught in more than one New Testament passage. As a matter of fact, it is taught in a number of New Testament passages. And so clear is the teaching of the New Testament on this theme that we may boldly say that without a proper understanding of the place and the time and the method and the circumstances of the rapture of the church, the entire doctrine of the Bible on the church must remain misunderstood.

Now in order to grasp our subject carefully, and the order as to the time, and the manner of the catching away of the church, we'd like to discuss it first from the question of the prophecies of the rapture. As I've indicated, there is more than one passage on it. There are more than three, more than a half dozen, but just now I'd like for us to take John 14:1-3; I Corinthians 15:50-58; I Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Now first of all, it was given against the background of the depression of the disciples. The Lord Jesus said that He was going to be separated from them. The One who had walked in their midst for three and a half years of wonderful life, wonderful teaching, wonderful miracle-working, wonderful setting forth of the plan and the program and mind and will of God at the end of that time, said, "I'm leaving." They would have been less than human if they had been able to remain untouched, unaffected by that declaration. They were so depressed in spirit that to these disciples, Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled."

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Here is a great antidote, a great cure, a great remedy for the heart trouble, the heart anguish, the concern and fear and perplexity of men's minds. Yet men are telling us on every side, "Let's leave these subjects alone. We're all right, we're getting along as we are, don't trouble us."

Beloved, this is the *cure* for trouble. It gets at the source of the agitation. "Let not *your heart* be troubled." It's easy enough to say, "Don't have the disease of heart trouble." What's the cure? Faith. "You believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions." He talks about it just as if you would talk about the corner of Sixth and Hope in Los Angeles, California. The familiarity of it, the nearness of it, the intimacy of it. He knows for He's been there. That is whence He came. That is the place toward which He is going. He says, "I'm going to my Father's house." There are many abiding places. No over-population there, no housing problem. "In my Father's house are many mansions." You won't be cramped for space. "If it were not so, I would have told you." He is declaring, "My word is reliable and trustworthy."

Oh, these folks that talk about a man's being reliable! That's only a relative term. I suppose that if a man lied once, he lied again and that he re-lied and that made him reliable. But Christ says, "If it were not so, I would have told you." You can rest on His word, for He never led you astray and He had no ulterior motive. He said that He Himself, not angelic administration, was going to prepare a place. And He added: "If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again." This did not refer to coming by the Holy Spirit. The One who was going, the One who was preparing the place, was the One who said "Believe in Me, I am coming again."

What could be more clear than that? If a parent leaves a home and says, "I'm going to come back," the child isn't going to look for the aunt or the uncle or the grandparents. No, he's going to look for the one who says, "I'm coming back." And here it is. He's preparing a *place*, and He is going to return.

What is the Father's house? Beloved, the Father's house is in Heaven, not the temple on earth. He will receive us to Himself, just as any bridegroom would receive his bride. He doesn't send the best man. It has never been known on the face of the earth that a best man went on the honeymoon, unless it was his own, but it was not with the bridegroom. The Heavenly Bridegroom is going to come and receive His bride unto Himself, and He says, "that where I am, there ye may be also." That's all any bridegroom and bride want, that where the one is, the other may be also.

That is a simple prophecy, and yet one of the most beautiful and one of the most consoling, one of the most distinct in all the Word of God.

In First Corinthians 15, we turn to the next prophecy we want to deal with on the rapture. There is a divine principle indicated here, first of all, and that is that flesh and blood cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. All we need is transmuted into the blood which gives us life and energy, "The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you to give an atonement for your soul because it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" Leviticus 17:11. There has got to be an existence on an altogether different principle. And He is talking about the Kingdom in glory; He's talking about Heaven here.

There's no need in the heavenly body — the body we shall have in the resurrection — for renewing, as a body with blood must have renewing. Flesh and blood are suited to the earthly sphere. Our Lord Jesus now at the right hand of the Father does not have a body of flesh and blood. He has a body of flesh and bones. He gave His life, represented by the blood, on Calvary, for you and me, the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God. He bore in His own body our sins upon the tree. Now Paul has answered in First Corinthians 15 two questions. In verse 35: "How are the dead raised up?" You know the lesson from farming and sowing. There is going to be a reaping. But what kind of body do they have? Simply a body like Christ — sown in dishonor and raised in honor, sown in weakness, raised in strength, sown corruptible, becomes incorruptible. Now the question is raised: What is going to happen to the bodies of believers who are alive when the Lord comes? The answer is: The rapture. We shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.

Do you know that the Bell Telephone Company has an instrument that has actually measured the twinkling of an eye? It is a split second. That's fast enough. In a moment, less than that. At the last trump. The very last trump for all the church's activity, the conclusion, the grand finale.

This is not the trumpet referred to in Revelation. How would they know about a reference in Revelation that didn't come until years later in the same century near the end of the century? Paul wouldn't be referring to something that John was yet going to write. How were the Corinthians to know about that? But the last trump, the consummating trump for the church's history, that will be the fulfillment of the church's history.

Then will be fulfilled the prophecy: "Oh death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" And where is the sting taken out of death, where is the grave robbed of its victory? Specifically in the rapture. That's why First Corinthians 15:50-58 isn't talking about an individual who has gone on to be with the Lord through death. That's a mockery. That isn't where death has lost its sting. Its sting is gone and has been lost through the work of Christ on Calvary, but it will be manifest in the highest extent when death is robbed of its prey of a whole generation of believers — who will be caught up when Jesus comes.

And now in First Thessalonians 4:13-18 we have the cause of the disclosure of the truth of the Rapture. "We would not have you ignorant, brethren." Now some folk believe in soul-sleeping. Beloved, nothing could be farther from the truth. Let's not get our figures mixed. To say that the soul sleeps is erroneous one hundred percent, because certain faculties are attached to certain areas of our body. For instance, you know my eyes see but they cannot smell at all. My mouth speaks. My ears hear, but my ears can't talk at all. My mouth can't hear at all. Do you think I am at a disadvantage? No! Every one has its own properties. There is no such thing in the Bible as soul-sleeping. At night, your body is asleep, because a body can sleep. While you may wake up as tired as you can be, your soul has been overly active. The soul is always awake in this life even when we are asleep. It is awake when our body sleeps in death. Sleep is of the body. The soul is always awake. Only the body sleeps. Sleep is a property of the body. It is not a faculty of the soul. The soul is always awake, it is always alert; it may be somewhat groggy at times, but it is alive and not asleep. You may question that sometimes, but nevertheless it is awake and alive.

Now why is Paul speaking to these Thessalonian believers? Specifically, because loved ones had gone on, and he says he did not want them to sorrow as the unsaved ones who have no hope. Now he tells them. Here is the comparison of the disclosure. If, and it is the logical "if" meaning "since" . . . "Since we believe that Jesus died and rose again" — they couldn't be believers if they didn't believe that, you see. They have to. That is basic, — that is Romans 10:9. They have to believe that God hath raised Jesus from the dead. If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them which are fallen asleep in Jesus, (the original is *through Jesus* or through the ministration of the Lord Jesus) as a loving mother would put a child asleep through her faithful loving care — "through Jesus will God bring with Him." With whom? With Christ the Lord.

And the confirmation for it is, "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord."

It is not some theory of some theologian. No. Well, what is it that the Lord is going to do? Here it is. We that are alive that are left unto the coming of the Lord shall in no wise precede or go ahead of them that have fallen asleep. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with a voice of an archangel and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first." Think of how much is going to be accomplished right in mid-air, right in the area where the devil is the Prince of the power of the air. The Lord is going to meet His bride and in glorious victory lead on back home. Then shall we that are alive, that are left together, we are going to be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. So shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore dispute about this? No! Wherefore grumble about this? No! Wherefore *comfort* one another with these words.

When Sandy the preacher was asked by his wife in his study one day in Scotland whether we would know each other in glory, he said, "Do you think that we will be more stupid there than we are here?" It is interesting that in the New Testament, wherever we find the curtain of Heaven drawn aside, we never find any introductions. There at the base of the Transfiguration, Peter said, "... Let us make three tabernacles: one for Thee; one for Moses and one for Elias." Peter knew that the Lord Jesus had been fellowshiping with these men. But Moses had died centuries before Peter was born. Elijah had been taken up in a whirlwind long before Peter saw the light of day. How did Peter know that they were Moses and Elijah? You never need introductions to people in glory. We'll all know each other. There will be union, re-union and recognition. There is a comfort in this disclosure.

A Christian was once visiting a very poor, sorely-afflicted believer in Dublin. He tried to comfort him with the text, "In my Father's house are many mansions." The dear soul said, "Do you see this gray hair? Do you think it is the golden streets that that head wants? Do you think it is the many glories of the city that these feet want to go around and sightsee? ... No ... read on. What does it say? 'I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there ye may be also.' That's the best text of all. It's the Lord Himself that I want."

What is the *program* of the rapture? Well, first of all, the Scriptures reveal that it takes place before the time of great wrath upon the earth. It will be before the tribulation, because the nature of the Church's hope

is the coming of the Lord — not anything intervening. Because of the nature of Daniel's 70 weeks, some folk don't realize that the tribulation is on Jewish ground. It is a part of unfinished business that God has with Israel. The church wasn't in Daniel's 69 weeks back in the Old Testament before the cross. The church doesn't belong in the Jewish age at all and she won't be there and you don't find her there from the 4th chapter of the Revelation till the 19th. When you do find the Church in the 19th, she's the bride of the Lamb — not on earth at all. What could be more clear? It is going to happen before the tribulation and in a moment of time, not a long process like sanctification. It will be in a moment. It will not need to be repeated. The church will be raptured before the tribulation "in a moment" and as a body.

No bridegroom just wants his wife in segments or on the installment plan. Many people tell us that to believe in this blessed hope, the rapture, is a deterrent to Christian life and service. They say it leads to pessimism. It leads to a solemnity such as the Word of God indicates. It doesn't lead us to be rosy-eyed about something that is a sad picture in the world. Beloved, all we can say is what the optometrist in Dublin, Ireland had over his window: "You can't be optimistic with a misty optic." You know, the Spirit of God must have considered otherwise for this doctrine in the New Testament is related to practically every exhortation. Is it watchfulness, it is watching for the coming of the Lord. Is it moderation, "Let your moderation be known unto all men, the Lord is at hand." That means He is always present but that passage could also mean that He is ever at hand, soon to come. Is it patience, therefore "Be patient unto the coming of the Lord." Yes, we are looking for "the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ."

When Ernest Shackleton, the great explorer, was driven back from his quest of the South Pole, he left his men on Elephant Island and gave them his solemn word of promise, "I'm coming back for you men." He tried to get back. He tried it once and he failed. The second time he failed, the third time he failed. Why? There was always more ice between him and the island than he could get around. It was dangerous. His boat could have been destroyed and the whole venture would have fallen apart. He tried to get back and fulfill his promise. Folks said, "Your men will understand, they know the hazards of the way; rest quietly." He replied, "I can't rest in spirit at all until I go back and redeem my promise." So one time, the wrong time of the year, he got nearer the island, and as he watched, he saw an open avenue between the sea and place where he had left his men. He ran the boat at the risk of being hit and he got all his

men on board and he came out of it before the ice had opportunity to crash the vessel. It was all done in half an hour. When the excitement was partly over, he turned to one of his men and said, "Well, all that I have to say, is that you men were packed and ready to go." The man to whom he spoke said, "You see, boss, Wilde over there, the second in command, he never gave up hope and whenever the sea was at all clear of ice, he'd roll up his sleeping bag and he'd say to all the hands, 'Roll up your sleeping bags, boys, the boss may come today!'" That is the way in which a black outlook was suddenly changed, and all these men in a matter of a half hour were safe, homeward bound.

Beloved, let's make it practical. Are we keeping our hope bright, based on the promise of a God who cannot fail, of a Saviour who has never gone back on one single promise? Thank God He has made the promise. He is a God of His word; He will not fail us.

WILL THE CHURCH ENTER THE TRIBULATION?

DR. GERALD B. STANTON

One of the things which makes the Bible distinct from any other book is the fact that it contains *prophecy*. The Bible speaks to us of things to come and does it with a certainty and with an assurance that divine revelation alone can bring. In Isaiah 46 at verse 11, we read this testimony from the Lord Himself: "Yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it." This passage tells us that God has a plan, and as we search through the rest of the Bible, we find out that what God has planned, He has been pleased to reveal. Is it not also obvious that that which He has revealed, He also means to be understood? We read from John 16, at verse 13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and *he will show you things to come*." This passage speaks of the blessed Holy Spirit who is the Author of divine truth, telling us so clearly not only will He testify of Christ and guide us into the truth of God, but He will also *show us things to come*. From this we may safely conclude that God would have us to understand prophecy.

There is a very basic unity among fundamentalists on the theme of prophecy. We are agreed on the fact of the resurrection. We are agreed on the Bema seat judgment for the Christian and upon the Great White

Throne for the unsaved. We have a basic agreement on the subjects of heaven and hell, and also upon the fact of the second coming of Jesus Christ from heaven. However, there is one prophetic theme which is troubling Christians across this land and that is the relationship of the rapture to the Great Tribulation. Will the church of Jesus Christ, will the truly born-again ones, enter into that time of sorrow and trouble? Over this particular issue churches have split their ranks. Several Seminaries have been divided. At least one Bible Conference has closed its doors. Mission boards are troubled over this theme and Christians everywhere are sounding their perplexity.

We do not have time here to consider the reasons for the present interest in the subject of the rapture of the saints, save to mention this one, that there is today a great deal of world unrest. We read in the book of the Revelation that there is a time coming when a fourth part of men shall be destroyed off the face of the earth. We read about the mountains being cast into the sea. Nowadays, with transcontinental missiles with their nuclear warheads, this is no longer strange language. We see that these things could come upon us very quickly. And so it is Christians today are concerned. They are wondering if the Tribulation period lies dead ahead. With a new intensity, they are asking, will the church go into that time of trouble?

As we face the question of the pretribulation return of Christ, we do not make it a test of orthodoxy. Those who disagree with us are fundamental men. Nor is it of necessity a point over which we break fellowship. Possibly the chief reason why confusion exists on this subject is this: the theme is so vast, the problems that are involved are so complex, the scriptures that must be considered are so many. We cannot at this point go into the complexity of the theme, but simply ask certain leading questions concerning the problem.

First of all, what is the Tribulation period? What is its basic purpose? What is its chief characteristic? I would suggest to you that from the viewpoint of man, the Tribulation period is a time of intense rebellion against God, a time of worldly prosperity under the leadership of Antichrist. It is a time of revolt against the sovereign God of the universe. From the viewpoint of Satan, the Tribulation period is another opportunity to achieve his ancient ambition to be worshipped as God. And in a small sense, he does achieve this as men turn to the worship of Antichrist. However, we do not understand the Tribulation period until we see it from the viewpoint of God Himself, until we see that the Tribulation

period of seven years is a time in which God is punishing and destroying the Christ-rejecting nations of the earth. This becomes crystal-clear as we turn to the book of the Revelation and consider chapters 6-19, the chief passage dealing with the characteristics of the Tribulation period. We read from Revelation, chapter 6, starting at verse 15, "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the *wrath* of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" From this we see that early in the Tribulation period, it is characterized as a time of the wrath of Almighty God.

Next, we turn to Revelation, chapter 15 and verse 1: "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God." Once again in 16:1, "And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth." Then again in verse 19, "... great Babylon came in remembrance before God to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath." These passages and many others declare that the chief characteristic of the Tribulation period is that it is a time of *divine wrath* upon the earth.

Secondly, we ask the question, Are there promises in the Word of God which exclude believers from specific periods of God's wrath? To that question we must respond, Yes, there are a number of such scriptures, chiefly Romans 5:9 and 1st Thessalonians 1:10 and 5:9. Reading these we find, "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." Turning to the 1st Thessalonians passage, we read in 1:9-10 of the coming of Christ from heaven: "How ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." And then again in the 5th chapter at verse 9, speaking of the Tribulation period under the terminology of the "day of the Lord" we read, "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation (deliverance) by our Lord Jesus Christ." We believe that these promises are given to the Church to show us that we shall be exempt from any period of divine wrath, including that of the Tribulation.

But then you ask, Doesn't the Bible say that in the world ye shall have tribulation? Again we answer, Yes, it does, in John 16:33. Likewise it says that we who are Christians are to be partakers of Christ's sufferings, and in Philippians 1:29: "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." I think that you will find as we examine the "tribulation" which is promised to the Church, that it is vitally different from the Tribulation period which is yet to come. As we examine the subject of tribulation in the Bible, we must distinguish first of all, the *source* from which it comes; secondly, the *object* upon which it falls, and thirdly, the *purpose* for which it is sent. When we do that, we find out that the tribulation of this age stems from the unsaved and falls upon the godly. It comes from the enemies of the gospel and it is poured out upon the believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, whereas the tribulation of the age to come is poured out by God Himself and falls, not upon the godly, but upon those who have neglected the Son of His love. So it is that we have two things that sound similar, but one of them is on the horizontal plane and the other is on the vertical plane. One comes from wicked men; the other comes from God. Let me suggest to you that a *dime* and a *dollar* are not the same simply because both of them are called "money." Nor are *persecution* and *wrath* the same, simply because both of these are termed "tribulation." This is one of the important distinctions which must be faced by all who seek an answer to the question, Shall the members of the church of Christ go through the Tribulation period?

We now turn to an interesting passage in 2nd Thessalonians, chapter 2. It has to do with the function of the Holy Spirit as the restrainer of sin and of Satan during the course of this present age. We read verses 6 to 8: "And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."

It will clarify our understanding of this particular passage if we read verse 7 this more accurate way: "The mystery of iniquity doth already work, only he that now restrains it will continue to restrain it until he be taken out of the way." There is a great deal of evidence which unites to identify the Restrainer of this passage as none other than the blessed Holy Spirit of God Himself. It is a very significant thing that the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit shall be removed from this world before the

revelation of the man of sin. Turning back to verse 3 of this passage we read: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for (that day of the Lord) shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." All of this will be fulfilled during the Tribulation, and Antichrist is that "man of sin." The passage declares that the Holy Spirit of God will be removed from this world before the revelation of the Antichrist. Now when we turn back to John 14, verse 16 and read that the Spirit will abide with the Church forever, we must conclude that the removal of the Church will be simultaneous with the removal of the Spirit. Since this will be before the manifestation of the man of sin, it follows that the time of the rapture must be pretribulation.

Further evidence for the removal of the Church before the Tribulation is found in a study of the 24 elders of the Apocalypse. In Revelation, chapter 4, the first momentous sign which greeted John after he was caught up into the presence of Him who sat upon the throne, was that of 24 elders crowned with golden crowns, clothed in white raiment and seated upon 24 thrones. We ask, Who are these glorious and privileged individuals found in such close proximity to the throne of God? We look into the passage and see that they cannot be angels. Angels are not redeemed, nor do they wear crowns, nor are they ever enthroned in the presence of the Lord. All the evidence points to the fact that these individuals are *men*, and more than that, that these are representative men. The office they bear is that of a representative. They function in a representative way. Likewise 24 is a Biblical number of representation. However, we are not left to speculate as to their identity. They bear five positive marks of identification, and these should suffice to clarify who they are and what their function may be in heaven.

First of all, their *position*. The elders are seated before the Lord in a place of high honor. There is a royal association between their thrones and the great central throne. It is significant that to the Church alone is co-enthronement promised. The Church has the right to this privilege, for she will be there as the very bride of Christ.

Secondly, their *worship*. The first recorded act of the elders is to worship God. For the most part, wherever they are seen in the Revelation, they are prostrate before the feet of the Lord. Such an attitude would be expected of saints just recently ushered into the presence of Christ.

Thirdly, their *raiment*. The elders are clothed in white raiment, which invariably speaks of the righteousness of saints. We believe that the raiment they wear constitutes additional proof that these are not angels, but are redeemed men.

Fourthly, their *crowns*. The fact that the elders are crowned shows that the rapture and the resurrection of Church saints are past, for disembodied spirits do not wear crowns. The fact that the elders have their crowns indicates that the Bema seat judgment for rewards has also taken place, evidently recently. The Church, fresh from scenes of earthly conflict and having just received their crowns, in gratitude and in humility cast their every reward before the feet of Him who alone is worthy to receive it. Details such as these all help us to identify the elders as representative of the Church of Jesus Christ, recently caught up in rapture experience and now rejoicing in the presence of her Lord.

The fifth mark of identification is the *song* of the elders. Turn now to the book of Revelation, chapter 5, verses 9 and 10: "And they sung a new song saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." We recognize that the things contained here in this song are true of the Church of Jesus Christ. We have been redeemed by the blood of Christ. We have been saved out of every kindred, and tongue and people and nation. We have been made a generation of kings and priests unto God, and certainly it is true that we shall reign upon the earth.

We believe therefore, that the presence of these 24 elders in heaven is a very significant thing. For, you see, when John in his vision enters heaven and looks down upon a world where the Tribulation rages, he does not find the Church. But as he looks about him in heaven, he sees the Church in the presence of the Lord. This occurs before a seal of judgment has been opened, before a trumpet of judgment sounds, before a vial of the wrath of God is poured out upon the wicked. The conclusion which may be drawn from the passage is obvious. Of course, the Bible does not come out clearly and say, "The rapture of the Church will occur before the Tribulation." Were that so, there would be no disputation at this point. But there are many wonderful truths in the Bible that do not lie immediately upon the surface. For example, the Bible does not say directly that God is a Trinity, although there is an abundance of evidence to prove that such is true. So it is with the time of the rapture. However, we

do have statements such as these: Philippians 3:20 "Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we *look* for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." We have seen how the Thessalonians turned to God from idols and to "wait for His Son from heaven." This looking, this waiting for the coming of Christ, indicates that the coming of the Lord Jesus is viewed in the New Testament as imminent. In fact, some had ceased their work, and all had to be exhorted to patience. This is hardly the attitude of men who believed that the coming of Christ could not be for yet another seven years.

Likewise, we have Titus 2:13: "Looking for that *blessed hope* and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ." I thoroughly agree with Dr. Barnhouse, who said: "If the church must enter the Tribulation, then farewell blessed hope, then welcome the coffin, then thrice welcome the undertaker!" We have 1st Thessalonians 4:18 which speaks of the coming of the Lord as a *comforting hope*. Certainly it would not be a comforting hope to tell a persecuted church that worse things were yet in store. Then again, we have 1st John 3:3 which speaks of the *purifying hope* of Christ's return. The rapture hope is used "to arm the appeal, to point the arguments and to enforce the exhortations" of the entire New Testament. This "looking for the Lord," and this blessed and comforting and purifying hope — all of this attains full significance only when we view the coming of Christ as pretribulational.

Revelation 3:10-11 is a most important passage: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold I come quickly, hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." In this passage we are told that there is an hour of temptation, an hour of trouble that is coming to try those that dwell upon the earth. But the promise is given clearly that the saints of the Lord Jesus Christ will be kept from that hour of trouble. The original language is very explicit at this point. It does not say that the believer will be kept from trouble *in* that hour, but that he shall be kept *from the hour itself*. It does not speak of safe passage through the hour, but of complete exemption from it. It is for this reason that we have called our recent book upon the pretribulational return of Christ, "Kept From The Hour." Having studied the matter in great detail over the course of the past six years, dealing with all the major texts and facing all the problems of importance, we are thoroughly persuaded that the pretribulational position is scriptural and has far more to commend it than any

alternate view. The Bible clearly sustains the view that the Church shall in no wise enter into the Tribulation.

In the brevity of this broadcast, we have been able to introduce only a little of the evidence for pretribulationalism. Nor have we entered into a discussion of the exegetical problems which exist. But we do trust that sufficient has been given to encourage the saints and assure them that when the day of Tribulation breaks upon the earth, the Church will by glorious rapture experience have entered into the presence of the Lord.

Lift up your heads, pilgrims aweary,

See day's approach now crimson the sky;

Night shadows flee, and your Beloved

Awaited with longing at last draweth nigh.

Oh, blessed hope! Oh, blissful promise!

Filling our hearts with rapture divine.

Oh, day of days! Hail thy appearing;

Thy transcendent glory forever shall shine!



RESURRECTIONS AND JUDGMENTS

DR. ARTHUR B. WHITING

To attempt to speak on the subject of resurrections and judgments as they concern the church in a few minutes seems to put me in the position of a fellow who attempts to put the Pacific Ocean into a teaspoon. However, there are many folks who are greatly confused on the subject of resurrection. They seem to think there will be a general resurrection of both the good and the bad alike, that all are going to be raised at the same time in the far distant future. But what saith the Scripture?

First, it is very clear from a study of the Word of God that there is a specific distinction in resurrections. The Bible certainly makes it abundantly plain that, while resurrection is going to be universal, it is universal only in that every person is to be affected thereby. There are decided differences as to character, object and time.

Let us turn to John chapter 5, verses 28 and 29, because here we have a central passage on this theme: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." That is what it says in the King James Version, but you will notice the American Standard Version has it more accurately: "Unto the resurrection of judg-

ment." Now look at those two verses and you see very definitely that the dead are divided into two distinct companies, companies of contrasting character: "They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment."

Basically then, there are two resurrections, and God has made it very clear that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father (John 5:23). This is true both for the saved and the unsaved. "But how?" you say. Well, in one of the ways in which our Lord is here presented in chapter 5. He appears, as you will see here, in two distinct characters; and in one of these ways men are going to meet Him in resurrection. Verses 24 and 25 of John 5 present the Lord Jesus as the Giver of Life. Verses 27 presents Him as the Executor of Judgment. I say again that every man must meet the Lord Jesus in one of these ways. They are going to meet Him as the Giver of Life, or they are going to meet Him as the Executor of Judgment. What men do with the Lord Jesus Christ in this life will determine how they will meet Him in resurrection. "Those who have done good," — and not for one moment must you think in terms of worldly thought. "Doing good" in this context means doing good so far as God is concerned. The only good you can do is to acknowledge your bankruptcy as a sinner and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour. "They that have done good," that is, those who have done good in believing God's testimony concerning His Son, are those who will possess eternal life, those who will receive in resurrection a body that is characterized by life, a body that will never die, a body that will be fitted for the enjoyment of the presence of the very Lord of Life Himself. But the Word goes on to say: "Those who have done evil," — and that doesn't mean simply painting the town red! It means the one who has done evil in refusing to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour will in resurrection face the Lord Jesus Christ in judgment, a judgment which issues in eternal separation from God.

Now I want you to turn to Revelation, chapter 20, verse 4 to 6, where we are going to see that this is the very truth which comes to light. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands." Now listen to this: "And they lived" — and that must mean they lived in resurrection, because we have been told in this verse that they were beheaded. Yet they lived in resurrection, "and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

Now it is just at this point that we are liable to run into some difficulty in view of what is said in the next verse: "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." Well, you say, the first resurrection then concerns the rest of the dead which lived not again until the thousand years were finished. No, this is where you have to watch very closely. If you have your Bibles open, you will see it. Put a mark of parenthesis at the very beginning of verse 5, before the word "but," and then conclude your parenthesis at the word "finished," because this is a statement which is parenthetical. Actually you ought to read the last part of verse 4 with the last part of verse 5, remembering that what comes in between is in a parenthesis. Read it that way and you have the truth. "They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years . . . This is the first resurrection."

Turn please, if you will, to the great resurrection chapter, First Corinthians, chapter 15. Here we are told at verse 22 that all men are going to be raised, but in verse 23 we have this statement: "Every man in his own order." This word "order" is of great significance. It was used as a military term in Paul's day and described the various companies to which the soldiers belonged. The sense is that the company or group to which you belong will determine the time, the precise time, that your body will be raised. To what company, what order, what group do you belong? In the verses that follow, verse 23 and 24, there is a specification of the main companies or groups which make up the two resurrections.

Now, of course, heading the list, we have the Lord Jesus Christ, because in Colossians 1:18, He is declared to be the First-born from the dead. That means He was the first one to have a genuine resurrection. Then we are told: "Afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." Now very definitely that must be a reference to the fact that the dead in Christ shall rise first. In other words, this is a picture of the resurrection of believers in this wonderful age of grace at the time the Lord Jesus Christ returns to the air for His bride. Christ is the First-fruits. Follow out the pattern. The church then must constitute the harvest. The harvest is gathered in as the Saviour comes for His own.

Now we must be reminded of the fact that in this passage before us we are simply tracing the main outline of the order of resurrection and a lot of details are not supplied. We have to go elsewhere for them. But remember there are only two resurrections, the resurrection unto life and the resurrection unto judgment. Remember, if you will please, that the resurrection unto life has many aspects and phases to it. It includes the resurrection of Jesus Christ: that was a resurrection unto life. It includes

the resurrection of the church when our blessed Lord shall come to claim His own, but it also includes the resurrection of Old Testament saints and the resurrection of the tribulation martyrs. These of course do not take place at the same time, but they do belong to the same order.

That leaves us then with only one other, the second or the last resurrection, which is described here in First Corinthians 15:24, as "the end." "*Then the end.*" Eliminate the italicized word "cometh" in verse 24 and you get the sense. "Then the end." The end what? Not the end of time necessarily, not the end of the program necessarily, but the end resurrection, which is the resurrection unto judgment, or the resurrection of the unjust as Doctor Luke says. In other words, it is the resurrection of the unbelieving dead of all ages, for the bodies of those who have died wedded to their sins instead of to the Saviour will remain in the grave until the close of Messiah's earthly reign. Then they are raised, and with body and soul reunited, they are judged before the Great White Throne. Here they have the sentence of final doom passed upon them and are cast into the lake of fire.)

To what order do you belong right now?

Just as there is confusion about the resurrections, so there is confusion about the judgments. Again, men think in terms of a general assize, of one universal judgment day when every man, saved or unsaved, will stand before the Lord. The truth of the matter is that, according to the Scriptures, there are at least eight major judgments set forth in the Bible. Four of them definitely have to do with the child of God: the judgment of the cross, the believer's self-judgment, the chastening judgment of the Father and the judgment seat of Jesus Christ. These are the things which concern the believer, and the rest of the judgments I think you know already. They are: The judgment of Israel, the judgment of the nations when the Lord returns with His people to the earth to establish His Kingdom here, the judgment of fallen angels, and then the final judgment so far as we can tell from the Word of God, the judgment of the Great White Throne.

Now our interest concerns the judgment which yet awaits us. I want us to look at some Scriptures, please, so that we may find the answer to some questions relative to the holding of this court. Turn to First Corinthians, Chapter 4. When is the final judgment coming for believers? Here is the answer in verse 5: "Until the Lord come." That's very clear, isn't it? The court is going to be held in association with the return of my blessed Saviour when He comes back for His own. Having received them to Himself, He will usher them into the heavenly court room, and there

they are going to be examined. There they are going to be evaluated. There the Lord is going to have the last word concerning every believer. I want you to see very definitely that this is a court concerning believers only, for in Second Corinthians 5:10 we have the very clear declaration: "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." Look at that little word "*we*." When Paul uses that in Second Corinthians 5 — and I think you'll find it some 26 times in the chapter — the reference is to *believers*.

No unsaved person is in this court. This is a court set up especially for those for whom the Lord has come. He has received them, and now He has taken them into the court room, and there they are. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." Don't overlook the little word "*all*" for it is so important. Every believer in this age of grace, without exception, will be in that court room, from the smallest to the greatest, from the immature to the mature, from the youngest to the oldest. We must *all* appear. That is interesting in connection with the rapture, because there are some folks who want us to believe that not all believers are going to be caught up in the rapture. All believers are going to be in this heavenly court, a court which is set up after the rapture. How will they get there, if the Lord does not come for them, and take them *all* to be with Himself?

Yes, here you see by implication the teaching that the rapture concerns the whole church, and the whole church is there before Him! "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ," we are told. What for? What is the great purpose for this court? Why are the saints subpoenaed to this heavenly court? I believe the proper answer lies in a recognition of two words that we have before us: *judgment seat*. It is a most interesting thing that usually in other instances in the Scriptures where judgment is in view, the word *throne* is mentioned, but not here. I am quite sure those believers to whom Paul wrote at Corinth understood exactly to what he was referring. They had seen it enough times. They knew this judgment seat was the high seat which was placed upon a high platform at the end of a Roman judgment hall, the place where Pilate himself sat, so that he was in full view of the entire audience and he himself could see everybody in the crowd before him. They knew it was the place where verdicts were rendered, but they also knew something else. They knew that this same seat was found in the great arena at Athens, where the Grecian games were held, that it was the place where the umpire took his position, the place where the judge who distributed the prizes was placed. They

knew that, and they knew this had come to be known as "the reward seat." They knew, I believe, what Paul was talking about. They knew these saints were not here for the purpose of punishment, but for the purpose of receiving rewards which they had earned for fidelity to their Lord while they were down here in this earth's scene.

Thus the judgment seat of Jesus Christ is speaking of an examination which will be made of every believer's life when the totality of his Christian experience will be brought under review. The things which he has done in the body, that is, through the instrumentality of the body, are all going to be spread before the Lord. It is not what he intended to do but what he has done, what he has actually produced while he was living down here in this body that really counts. The Lord is going to weigh the whole life, and on the basis of what He finds He is going to issue rewards, or allow that person to suffer the loss of reward.

I wish you would note First Corinthians, chapter 3, verse 10 through 15, because that is the classic passage constituting a great commentary upon Second Corinthians 5:10. Read it carefully and remember that one day the fire test is going to be applied to your life and to mine, and that which belongs to the category of the perishable, that which has stemmed from the flesh, will go up in smoke. Only that which comes from the working of the Spirit of God in the believer's life is that which is entitled to be known as the imperishable. That is what will last.

I tell you, friends, here is something we all are facing. It is in the future, but is something that concerns us *now* because we can prepare for it. There are many things I can do nothing about in this life. I really had nothing to do with my birth. Nobody ever asked me if I wanted to be born. I just came! There are many things in life over which you have no control, no choice whatsoever. Here is one place where you *do* have a choice. You can choose right now to do that which is the will of God, or you can choose to follow your own way. And what will happen? All of those products of the flesh where you have followed your own desire and your own inclinations are going to be burned up at the judgment seat of Christ, and only that which stems from loyal obedience to the Lord of Glory is going to survive. That being true, what manner of men ought we to be? We should be men and women who are loyal to the Lord one hundred per cent.

Our Father, bless Thy Word to every heart, water it with the Spirit that it may be productive, issuing in fruit to Thy name's honor and glory. Amen.

THE MILLENNIUM

DR. LOUIS T. TALBOT

The millennium is going to be a time of glory. Oh, that will be glory for me! However, the millennial reign of Christ is going to be more than just glory for me. In the first place, it is going to be glory for the Lord Jesus. During the millennial reign, Christ is going to be King in as definite a sense as any king this world has ever seen. Only He is going to have a wider empire, and a more autocratic sway. When He comes back to this earth, His capital city is going to be the city of Jerusalem, and He is going to sit upon the throne of His father, David. Listen to a few of the texts that I have gathered: Take, for instance, Luke chapter 1, verses 31 to 33. Here we find the angel Gabriel speaking to Mary and this is what he says: "And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of His father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

Brother, that prophecy has never been fulfilled! Christ rode into Jerusalem and there He was arrested. He was nailed to a cross, and Pilate said: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." When He was thrust out of this world, the Lord Jesus Christ went to heaven and sat down, not on David's throne, but on His Father's throne. Jesus is not on His own throne now at all. His throne is the throne of David, and, my friends, when was the throne of David taken up to heaven anyway? The throne of David belongs to this earth and it belongs to Jerusalem. The angel said, "He shall be great . . . and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David . . . and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

And as to the extent of His kingdom, listen to this: Psalm 72:8: "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." Brother, that takes in all that bunch of Russia! Don't you worry about them. Don't worry about Kruschev! I want to tell you that one day the Lord is just going to speak and they will all be gone. When the Lord returns He is going to give this old earth a thorough house cleaning, and His kingdom shall be from sea to sea and from the river unto the ends of the earth. That's the millennium, brother.

What will be the capital city of the King? Well, some of you folks may think it is going to be Los Angeles. Some of you Swedes may think it is going to be Stockholm. But listen! it says in Isaiah chapter 2, verses 2 and 3: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of

the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob: and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

It is not only going to be glory for the Lord, but, brother, it is going to be glory for the church. You know that the church is going to come back and rule with Him. The Word of God says that when He shall appear, that we are going to be with Him in glory, and we are going to reign with Him. In what way are we going to reign? The twelve apostles though they are members of the body of Christ, are going to have a unique place that the rest of us are not going to have in the millennial reign of Christ. In the 19th chapter of Matthew in verse 28 we read this: "And Jesus said unto them, (that is, to his disciples), Verily, I say unto you, That ye which have followed me in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." In that day, the twelve tribes of Israel will be back. They will have their own allotment in regard to space as it was before the division of the kingdom and the disciples are going to have a special relation to the twelve tribes. Jesus said, "Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging." That word *judge* is not a judicial office; it is an administrative office. That is, Christ is going to gather Israel and govern the world through the church.

You and I are going to have bodies that have no limitations whatsoever. When I get my resurrection body, it is going to be a real body, but the body is not going to govern the Spirit. The Spirit is going to govern the body. We will have a body like the body of the Lord Jesus.

Israel in that day is going to be back in its own land, and they are going to be converted and they are going to know their Messiah. There are hundreds and hundreds of prophecies on that. Here is one in regard to the nation of Israel. Zechariah, chapter 8, verses 13 and 23: listen, "And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel: so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, but let your hands be strong." Then the prophet goes on to say: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts: In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you." Why, in the millennium, when a Jew comes to town, they will think that it is the greatest

honor that has been conferred upon the city! How does the millennium end? It ends in rebellion. During the thousand years reign of Christ, a lot of people will be born into the world, and I want to tell you, my dear friends, that if any certain set of conditions could change the human heart, the millennium would. But even the glory of the Lord doesn't change the human heart. The only thing that can change the human heart, brother, is regeneration. When restraint is taken off those who are unregenerated there is a rebellion. But that rebellion will not last long, for fire falls from Heaven. Well, you may say, in the millennium, Brother Talbot, all these things that you have been talking about must be away off. No, my dear brother, they are not. Let the church be translated today, and I tell you in seven years we would have the millennial reign of Christ on earth. And when the Lord returns in glory, we're going to come back with Him!

Some people have asked about Isaiah 65:20 which states that a child shall die a hundred years of age.

That scripture just means that life is going to be extended and if a person is cut down in rebellion at a hundred years of age, he will still be a child. The word *millennium* means a thousand years and it is used to describe the coming age because we read in the Bible that the Lord Jesus is going to come back and rule and reign a thousand years. The fact as to such a reign is set forth in the 20th chapter of the book of Revelation where you read six times over, "And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years." Because the Lord Jesus Christ is going to rule and reign for a thousand years, that age has come to be called "The Millennium." If we had always referred to that coming age as "the kingdom age" — that kingdom which the Lord Jesus Christ referred to when He said, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done as in heaven so in earth," as the prophets referred to it, I think that a great deal of the misconceptions that are in the minds of a lot of folks today would not be there. But instead we have used this word *millennium*.

I was talking to a fellow some time ago and he was arguing that there was not going to be a millennium because the word *millennium* is not in the Bible. Well, the word *millennium* isn't in the Bible, but I want to tell you the word *Trinity* isn't in the Bible either. But while the word *Trinity* isn't in the Bible, the *doctrine* of the Trinity is, and while the word *millennium* is not in the Bible, the *doctrine* of the millennium is. It is a fact that Christ is going to rule, and He is going to reign for a thousand years.

Now before the Lord Jesus Christ comes back to this earth to reign for

a thousand years, six things have to take place. "You may say, 'Preacher, six! why it must be a long way off.' " No, brother, I want to tell you that these six things are going to take place just the same as spokes of a wheel go around. Which one of the spokes of a wheel goes around first? They all go around together! We are today living in the church age. The Lord is calling out from the nations a bride for the Lord Jesus and all those who put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ during this age, are formed into the body of Christ. Now how many people are going to be members of the church? We do not know. God alone knows the figure. The church may be complete and it may be translated before I get through with this address.

So the first thing is that the church must be completed. The second thing is the church must be translated. The translation of the church is something that may take place before the next sentence falls from my lips. The third thing that has to take place before we can have the millennium is the appearance of the antichrist. He cannot be revealed while the church is here. That is the reason why the church cannot go through the tribulation because the antichrist is the fellow who is going to stir up hell upon this earth. The church can't be in it just simply because the antichrist cannot be revealed until the church is gone. The fourth thing is the establishment of a Jewish remnant in the land of Palestine, and, brother, we have it now.

I tell you that these are wonderful days in which we are living. I remember about twenty years ago folks were asking the question "How in the world could the Jews ever get the land of Palestine, with all the Arabs having governed it for 1250 years or more, and the Mohammedan world all backing any movement of that kind?" But, my dear brother, the only clean-cut result of World Wars No. I and No. II was the land of Palestine changed hands from the Turk and the Arabs and was made a homeland for the Jew. And I believe that one of the reasons why God raised up Hitler was to spur on the Zionist movement. There must be a Jewish state and then, fifth, the devil must be bound. There is only one who can bind the devil and that is the Lord Jesus. When the Lord Jesus comes back, He is going to command one of His angels to take the devil and chain him. He is not going to be chained with a bunch of bolts, he is going to be chained by the mighty power of the Lord Jesus. Then the sixth thing which you must have before we can have the millennium is that the Lord Jesus is to be back here, in Person. He has to be back to sit on David's throne according to the prophecy. These six things can happen all at once. Once the wheel starts moving, all the spokes go around at the same time. "Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus!"