

STUDY TEN –THE RAPTURE...A MYSTERY FINALLY REVEALED III

INTRODUCTION

“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” (1 Corinthians 15:51-53)

Continued from last week:

THE CORRUPTIBLE WILL PUT ON INCORRUPTIBILITY

In First Corinthians 15:53, Paul furthermore stated, *"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."*

The word "corruptible" is a translation of the Greek word which depicts what is naturally subject to decay or suffering the effects of wear, tear, and age. It portrays that which is perishable and eventually grows old and disintegrates.

When Jesus descends into the lower atmosphere with a shout — and with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God — it will summon forth the dead and decaying bodies of those who died in Christ. They will be raised "incorruptible," and at the same time, those who are alive and in faith in that moment will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. And in that transformative moment, the dead and the living will "put on incorruption." This is what Paul taught in First Corinthians 15:53 when he wrote, *"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."*

The words "put on" are an interpretation of the Greek word which is a word that portrays putting on a new set of clothes — and, specifically, clothes that are so comfortable that one just sinks into them and feels at home. And not only will we be re-clothed, but we will also be so comfortable in our newly transformed bodies that we will comfortably sink into them as if they were tailor-made just for each of us. In verse 53, we see the word "incorruption" is again from the Greek word which describes that which is incapable of decay or that which is incapable of suffering the effects of wear, tear, and age. Thus, whereas before we lived in mortal bodies that suffered the effects of wear, tear, age, and death, we will suddenly find ourselves reclothed with new, transformed bodies that are completely incapable of decay or of any effects of wear, tear, age, or death.

WHAT WILL YOUR TRANSFORMED BODY BE LIKE?

I want you to understand that a core New Testament doctrine is that in this moment when Christ comes for the resurrection of the dead bodies of the righteous and for the rapture of the Church, all the perishable bodies of those who died in faith and those Christians who are alive and in faith, will be re-clothed with bodies that are incorruptible, imperishable, and eternal.

“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” (1 John 3:2)

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A SPIRITUAL BODY?

To understand the characteristics of the resurrected spiritual body of a believer, we must turn to Philippians 3:20 and 21, where Paul wrote, *"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for*

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the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

Notice these four words or phrases in the passage: change, vile, fashioned like, and subdue. The word "change" in this passage is a word that means to completely alter, to change, or to be physically transfigured. This word is used once in First Corinthians 4:6, three times in Second Corinthians 11:13-15, and here in Philippians 2:21. In each instance, it depicts an outward form that is adapted from its original condition and is so transformed that it takes on an entirely new appearance.

In the Greek and Roman world, this word was used to picture the changing of costumes for the theatrical stage. In one moment, an actor on the stage appeared in one form, but with a costume change, he would reappear in a completely different costume.

Although this was used theatrically to describe the superficial changing of an actor's costume, Paul used this word to describe a permanent transformation that will occur as the power of God transforms the bodies of all authentic believers. In one moment, the dead bodies of the righteous and those who are alive and are raptured will permanently change their outward costumes. Dead bodies and living bodies will be exchanged as God re-clothes them with new glorious bodies.

When the words "change," "vile," "fashioned like," and "subdue" are taken together in this whole text, it tells us that in the moment the dead in Christ are resurrected and the alive in Christ are raptured, their base, lowly, mortal bodies will be changed. Like an actor who changes costumes, God will re-clothe us with supernaturally transformed bodies that are exactly fashioned like Jesus' resurrected body. In a nearly indivisible moment of time — like the twinkling, twitch, or blink of an eye — God's *dunamis* power will be released and the bodies of the dead and the living will fall in line and submit to that glorious power that will instantaneously transform them to be like Jesus in His glorious, resurrected state.

WHAT IS JESUS' RESURRECTED, GLORIFIED BODY LIKE?

In the gospels, we discover explicit examples of what Jesus' resurrected, glorified body was like after He was raised from the dead and ascended to the Father. In His resurrected body, Jesus' physical appearance was so changed that the disciples did not quickly recognize Him.

On the day of the resurrection, Luke 24:13-30 tells us that two of the apostles were walking to Emmaus and Jesus joined them. On that long walk, He spent time fellowshiping and sharing scriptures with them. But they did not recognize it was the Lord until He broke bread and prayed. Luke 24:31 tells us that in that exact moment, their eyes were opened, and that is when they realized it was Jesus. After knowing Jesus so well, it is nearly unthinkable that they did not immediately recognize Him, but this shows how transformed His appearance was after His resurrection.

John 21:1 also tells us, *"After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias."* But, again, Jesus was not quickly recognized. In verse 12, we read: *"After His resurrection, the disciples gave Jesus a piece of a broiled fish, and He took it and ate it in front of them."* Thus, we see that Jesus, in His resurrected and glorified body, was able to eat.

We saw earlier that Jesus joined the disciples at the shore on the Sea of Tiberias, which is another name for the Sea of Galilee. After a miraculous catch of fish, Jesus said to them, *"...Come and dine"* (John 21:12). This means that in His resurrected, glorified body, Jesus was able to eat. In Luke 22:15 and 16, Jesus had previously told them, *"...With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God."*

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The mere fact that Jesus offered to dine with them means the Kingdom of God at this time had already come. But the point here is that in His resurrected, glorious body, Jesus was able to eat with His disciples. Luke 24:42-43 also tells us that after Jesus told His disciples to handle His resurrected and glorified body, they "... gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of a honeycomb..." The rest of that passage says, "...And he took it, and did eat before them." In Luke 22 and 24, we see that Jesus, in His resurrected and glorified body, was able to eat.

But we must not forget the Bible teaches that the resurrected and those who are raptured will be transported to Heaven to be seated at Christ's table for the "Marriage Supper of the Lamb" (see Revelation 19:9). This is a time during which the saints will share food. Those who participate in this banquet will be in their resurrected or glorified bodies — so we see again that even in a resurrected and glorified body, one can and will eat.

In His resurrected body, Jesus was able to pass through solid matter. In John 20:19, we read, *"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews..."* But even though both doors were solidly locked, John 20:19 goes on to say that Jesus *...stood in the midst..."* The word "midst" is from the Greek word which means right in the very middle. Without ever opening a door, in His resurrected and glorified body, Jesus was able to pass through the walls and doors of that room to appear in the very midst of the disciples.

In His resurrected body, Jesus was capable of being handled and touched. Luke 24:36 tells us that Jesus again passed through solid matter and appeared in the room where the disciples were gathered behind locked doors. The door was locked, so at first, the apostles were terrified by His presence and thought perhaps they were seeing a spirit (see Luke 24:37). But to prove to them that it was really Him in His resurrected form, Jesus pleaded with them to reach out and handle him. In Luke 24:39, we read that Jesus said, *"behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."*

Luke 24:40 then goes on to say, *"And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet."* The word "shewed" means that Jesus literally raised His hands toward them so the disciples could touch them. Then He showed them His feet so they could be touched. Jesus allowed His disciples to handle and touch Him in this event. Thus, Jesus, in His resurrected, glorified body, could be handled and touched.

In His resurrected body, Jesus was able to appear and disappear. Luke 24:30-31 tells us, *"And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight."*

Jesus appeared to them near the sea but then disappeared or vanished right before their eyes. Thus, we know that in His resurrected, glorified body, Jesus was able to appear and disappear as needed.

In His resurrected body, Jesus could supernaturally travel vast distances. Luke 24:13-36 tells us that in a single day Jesus appeared in multiple locations. Those verses begin by telling us, *"Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him... Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight... So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, 'The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!... Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them...' "*

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In this one day, Jesus appeared to two disciples as they walked to Emmaus and then reappeared a great distance away in an upper room where the eleven disciples were gathered. This clearly demonstrates that in His resurrected and glorified body, Jesus was able to supernaturally travel great distances very quickly.

In His resurrected body; Jesus could ascend to Heaven and descend back to Earth.

When Jesus spoke to Mary Magdalene in the Garden on the morning of the resurrection, she reached out to touch Him, and Jesus told her, *“Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.”* (John 20:17)

However, it was later that same evening that Jesus passed through solid matter into the room where the disciples were hiding, and Jesus told them, *“Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see...”* (Luke 24:39).

Scholars conclude from this that between the morning when He told Mary Magdalene not to touch Him, and the evening when Jesus urged the disciples to handle Him, He ascended to the Father and descended back to the earth. This shows that in His resurrected, glorified body, Jesus could ascend and descend from Heaven to Earth as needed.

In Acts 1:9, the Bible says, *“While they [the disciples] beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.”* This is another instance that shows Jesus, in His resurrected and glorified body, was able to ascend to Heaven. The limited restraints of a natural body were removed, and in His resurrected, glorified body, Jesus could freely ascend and descend between Heaven and Earth.

Keep in mind that in Philippians 3:21, Paul said Christ will *“change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself”* Based on what we have gleaned from Scripture about Jesus resurrected and glorified body, this means when the bodies of the dead in Christ are raised and those who are alive and in faith are raptured, their transformed and glorified bodies will:

- Be completely different, just as Christ's resurrected, glorified body had been changed.
- Be able to eat, just as Christ ate in His resurrected, glorified body.
- Be able to pass through solid matter, just as Christ did in His resurrected, glorified body.
- Be able to appear and disappear, just as Christ's did in His resurrected, glorified body.
- Be able to travel vast distances, just as Christ traveled in His resurrected, glorified body.
- Be able to travel through different realms (i.e, Heaven to Earth), as needed, just as Christ did in His resurrected, glorified body.

In the resurrection and the rapture of the Church, those whose bodies are raised from the dead and those who are supernaturally snatched away in the Rapture will forever be freed from corruption and truly be liberated from previous physical limitations. This implies we will be so transformed that we will be able to travel to and fro in our new glorified bodies — even at great distances and speed — precisely as Jesus did after His resurrection.

So, after studying this topic from First Corinthians 15:51-53 of the resurrection of the "righteous dead" and the rapture of the Church, are YOU listening for the shout, the voice of the archangel, and the blast of the trumpet?