

Pentwater Bible Church

Revelation Message 13

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Ezekiel's Vision by Francesco Collantes cir 1630

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Revelation Message Thirteen

THE THINGS WHICH WILL BE

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Revelation 1:17–19

¹⁷And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: ¹⁸I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. ¹⁹Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter (KJV).

The Lord Jesus divided up the whole letter of the Revelation in three sections. *The things which John has seen, the things which are* and as we now continue in the Revelation into the last and largest section *the things which shall be hereafter*; which constitutes the majority of the text of the book.

John saw the Lord Jesus in His now glorified, risen, eternal state. He was so awestruck that he said, “*when he laid his right hand upon me, I fell at his feet as dead.*” This realization was very powerful and Jesus called it *the things which thou hast seen*. Moving to the second section of the book Jesus called it *the things which are*. We saw this as the condition of the Church in the world and how it progressed through the ages of its history. The Church Age began at the first Pentecost recalled by Dr. Luke in the book of Acts. At that time thousands of Jewish men from all over the Middle-East were in Jerusalem for the holiday of Pentecost as required by the Law. Jesus said this begins *the things which shall be hereafter*.

Acts 2:1–15

¹And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. ³And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. ⁵And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. ⁶Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. ⁷And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? ⁸And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? ⁹Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, ¹¹Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. ¹²And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? ¹³Others mocking said, These, men are full of new wine. ¹⁴But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be

this known unto you, and hearken to my words: ¹⁵ For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day (KJV).

The Church Age proper will continue until the Rapture and Resurrection of the Church Age Saints.

We must remember that:

The more literally we take the Bible, the more fundamental our theology becomes. The less literally we take the Bible, the more liberal our theology becomes.

If we go the liberal route God's message to us is lost.

THE WORD RAPTURE NOT IN OUR BIBLES

The Word Rapture does not appear in our Bibles. It comes from the description of the program of this event found in I Thessalonians chapter four. The word there used by the apostle in verse seventeen is the Greek word *Harpazo*. It is translated as; to snatch or catch away. When the Greek New Testament was first translated into Latin by Jerome in 405 AD. He used the Latin word for *Harpazo* which is *Rapere*. The Anglicized word for this Latin word is Raptured. This is what has remained in the common Christian lexicon

THE PROMISE OF THE RAPTURE

Jesus Himself promised that this even would occur.

John 14:2-3

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (KJV).

This passage where the apostle John is quoting Jesus contains the promise of the Rapture of the Church. In these verses, Jesus promised to return for the believers. He does not mention the timing or the circumstances, only the fact that there is a *coming of Jesus* for His believers whom he referred to as His Sheep (John 10:27). This passage does make one key point: this coming for the believers was for the purpose of taking them to where He was then going to at that time. Since Jesus was then going to Heaven, the Rapture is a coming to take the saints to Heaven and not to the earth. The passage itself says nothing about the timing of the Rapture, only that the result of it is our entry into Heaven. The verb to come is in the present tense meaning an assertion of "I Come" which make it immanent. Another words it can happen any time. Further, they use of the term "Receive you Unto Myself" is indicative of all who will be received unto Jesus will go at the same time. For now, the Holy Spirit has charge over us while the Savior is absent from us on earth. When Jesus returns for the believers, He will assume the control over our lives from the Holy Spirit. The preposition "Unto" means movement toward. This indicates that when He comes to receive His believers, He will not be the only one involved in the movement. His believers will be moved all at

once from the earth toward Christ to meet Him. Jesus is implying an analogy of the ancient Jewish wedding to the rapture of the Church.

OBJECTIONS TO THE PASSAGE REFERRING TO THE RAPTURE

1. Some have said that this passage simply means that when we die Christ comes for us. That is in opposition to Luke 16:22 which indicates that it is angels that transport the souls of believers at death to Heaven.
2. Some have tied this to Jesus' resurrection. This view has problems since verse 3 clearly indicated that He would come again after He went away. His going away refers to His going to Heaven. So therefore, He means after He ascends to Heaven. Jesus had promised that He would come again and His future coming would be similar to His first coming which was from Heaven. So therefore, His coming for His Church will be from Heaven.
3. Some have asserted that this is a promise of the Holy Spirit coming after His ascension on the day of Pentecost. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came to earth to indwell believers, not take them to be where He is in Heaven. The coming is actually the counterpart of the going away. Jesus ascended physically to Heaven and He will come again from Heaven to receive His believers to Himself. Jesus did not ascend physically on the day of Pentecost.
4. Some have referred to this as the Second Coming seen in Revelation chapter 19:11-16. We will respond to those claims when we examine the timing of the Rapture in our next session.

THE PROGRAM OF THE RAPTURE

I Thessalonians 4:13-18

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words (KJV).

In this passage the apostle Paul is answering a question that was asked. Do the believers who have died (asleep) miss out on this blessed event? They were thinking that only living believers would see the Rapture and that the dead believers would be left out. This question arose because some of the believers had recently died. Their loved ones who were still living were distressed, not knowing whether their dead loved ones would lose out.

This passage was written to comfort the bereaved members with the truth that dead believers will not miss out on the benefits of the Rapture. In fact, they will be given a preference in order. In reference to the death of believers, Paul uses the term "sleep." Thus, the Bible views the death of believers as a temporary suspension of physical activity until the believer awakens at

the Rapture. Just as physical sleep is temporary (a temporary suspension of physical activity until one awakens, yet there is no suspension of mental activity), so is death it is a temporary suspension of physical activity until one awakens at the resurrection.²

THE PROGRAM OF THE RAPTURE OCCURS IN SEVEN STAGES.

First: *the Lord himself shall descend from heaven.* At some point in the future, Jesus will come out of the Third Heaven and descend into the earth's atmosphere.

Second: *with a shout.* One day the Lord Jesus will give *a shout*, a command for the resurrection and the translation to occur.

Third: *with the voice of the archangel.* Michael the Archangel will be used in the case of the Rapture. Jesus gives the *shout* or command for the program of the Rapture to begin, and it is Michael's task to set it into motion, so he repeats the command.

Fourth: *with the trump of God.* With Michael's repetition of the command, the trumpet sounds, and this triggers the Rapture itself. Thus, this trumpet serves as a summons for the plan to get into motion.

Fifth: *the dead in Christ shall rise first.* This is the resurrection. This is why the dead believers will not miss out on the benefits of the Rapture. They will actually begin to enjoy the benefits of the Rapture first. The expression *in Christ* limits the resurrection at the time of the Rapture to those who were baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body, which only began in Acts two. Thus, this resurrection of genuine Church Age believers who have died.

Sixth: *then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds.* The resurrection of the dead saints is followed by the transformation of the living saints. Every believer without exception will be removed from the earth and will be united with the Lord Jesus in the heavens. The living believers will be caught up (raptured) with the dead ones. What is important to see is that all Church Age genuine believers are raptured.

Seventh: *to meet the Lord in the air: so shall we ever be with the Lord.* The final step is the fact that both the resurrected dead believers and transformed living believers will both meet the Lord Jesus in the air. Then comes the guarantee that once believers have been united with Him in the air, they will permanently remain with Him follow Him as He has already promised in John 14:1-3. Again in the program there is no mention of the timing of when it occurs.

² Fruchtenbaum, A. G. (2003). [*The footsteps of the Messiah : a study of the sequence of prophetic events*](#) (Rev. ed., p. 144). Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries.

THE LIVING BELIEVERS ARE TRANSFORMED

I Corinthians 15:50-58

Now this I say, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Listen, 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, the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible will put on incorruption, and this mortal will put on immortality. When this corruptible will have put on incorruption, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then the saying that is written shall come to pass: "Death is swallowed up in victory. "O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory? "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor in the Lord is not in vain (MEV).

What about those who are *not* dead at Christ's coming? Paul now turned to answer that unexpressed question. Our bodies are only fitting for this earth in its corrupt state. They are made of flesh and blood. The natural body, could not enter the eternal state.

The Rapture of the church was a mystery (*mystērion*) in that it had not been known in the Old Testament but now was revealed. The dead in Christ will first be raised, and then the living will be translated instantaneously to our glorified resurrected bodies. The trumpet, as in the Old Testament, signaled the appearance of God (Exodus 19:16). It is the last blast for the church because this appearance shall never end (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Like the dead (I Corinthians 15: 42–43), the living will exchange the natural bodies which are corrupt since the Fall in exchange for the eternal and perfect (I Corinthians 15: 13:10). For genuine born-again believers in Christ, death's power will be removed.

Death came as a result of man's rebellion and disobedience against the command of God (Genesis 3:17–19). The Law, which epitomized the command of God, was thus the mirror against which human rebellion and disobedience was portrayed. Like the first Adam, all who followed him rebelled (I Corinthians 15: 2:14). But through the obedience of the last Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 15: 15:45; Romans 5:19; Philippians 2:8–11), came "victory" and life (1 Corinthians 15:22; cf. 2:15–16).

Paul's doctrinal declarations led to practical commands and this chapter's conclusion was no exception. The Corinthians were urged to stand firm in the apostles' teaching (I Corinthians 15: 2), unmoved by the denials of false teachers (Ephesians 4:14). This certainty, especially concerning the Resurrection, provided an impetus to faithful service (1 Corinthians 3:8; Galatians 6:9) since labor in the resurrected Lord is not futile (*kenos*, "empty"; I Corinthians 15:10, 14, 17, 30–32).

IMMINENCY

Something that is imminent means that it can happen at any time. It carries with it the certainty of an event occurring but also the uncertainty of not knowing when it will happen. Our English word actually comes from the Latin *immineo* meaning to overhang or project. It means close at hand in its incidence. Since we do not know when Christ's coming will be we say it is imminent. 1) We can't count on some amount of time before He comes. 2) We cannot set a date for it. 3) We cannot say it will happen soon. Because of this Christians should always be waiting patiently for our Lord to return at any time. Here are some New Testament passages that teach the imminent coming of Jesus.

I Corinthians 1:7

⁷ so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (KJV).

Paul had an ever present sense of Christ's return as imminent while we wait.

I Corinthians 16:22

²² If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, Maranatha (KJV).

The term Maranatha consists of three Aramaic words "Mar" (Lord), "ana" (our), and "tha" (come). It means "Our Lord Come." It is a reference to the Imminency of the return of Jesus.

Philippians 4:5

⁵ Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand (KJV).

Here we are commanded to engage in appropriate conduct since His return is imminent (at hand).

Titus 2:13

¹³ looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ (KJV).

This is a direct command to look for the appearing of Jesus Christ. His return could happen at any time and therefore is our blessed hope.

James 5:7-9

⁷ Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. ⁸ Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. ⁹ Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door (KJV).

Just as a farmer waits for the crops to come from the ground in patience so should we also be patience in the coming of the Lord as it draws closer. This is a direct reference to its Imminency. The use of the Greek verb translated “*draweth nigh*” are in a perfect tense and indicative mood. What this means is grammatically that this action of waiting and drawing near continues. James is saying that Christ’s coming was drawing near before he wrote this and His coming continues to be near.

I John 2:28

²⁸ And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming (KJV).

If the readers would maintain their fellowship with God, they would enjoy a genuine boldness of speech when He will come (appear). This refers to our abiding in Jesus until He comes for us.

The exact point in all human history when this will occur is not given to us in Scripture. Christ even said we would not know the day or the hour as He discussed its Imminency.

Matthew 24:42

*⁴⁰ Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left
⁴¹ Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. ⁴² Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.
⁴³ But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. ⁴⁴ Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as you think not the Son of man cometh (KJV).*

Philippians 3:20-21

²⁰ For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: ²¹ 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 (KJV).

Here Paul makes it clear that we wait and watch for the Lord to return at any time. When He comes He will change our corrupt bodies into a glorious resurrected body.

RESURRECTION

At death the human spirit is separated from the body (Genesis 3:19; Ecclesiastics 12:7; 2 Corinthians 5:8). A resurrection is an event whereby a dead body is raised to immortal life for some explicit purpose. This is different from somebody coming back to life. This doctrine is two-fold, pertaining to (A) the resurrection of Christ and (B) the resurrection of humanity, including both saved and unsaved. In other words, death does not end life it starts it! In the Old Testament the Doctrine of Resurrection is taught in Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2-3; Hosea 12:14. It was believed by the patriarchs (Genesis 22:5; with Hebrews 11:19; Job 19:25-27) and revealed through the prophets.

In the New Testament the resurrection is taught in John 5:25-29, I Corinthians 15:50-51; I Thessalonians 4:14-18, and Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15. This doctrine contains the implication of immortality. They are raised to live forever. Christ was the first one to be raised from the dead with a resurrected body. Others were raised from the dead such as Lazarus but he had a normal body and died later (restored).

One of the fundamental truths of Christianity is the fact in Christ guarantees eternal life. We may experience physical death but not eternal death, which is separation from God. This is what happens to unbelievers. They die physically to an eternal damnation. When Jesus died and rose again from the dead, He was the first person of a human body to be resurrected.

1Corinthians 15:20-23

But now is Christ risen from the dead, [and] become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man [came] death, by man [came] also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming (KJV).

THE RESURRECTION ORDER

This shows that all of the Christians shall live again or be resurrected and that there is an orderly progression of the stages of resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:20-23

²⁰But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. ²¹For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. (KJV)

The rest of the stages of resurrection are described in other books of the Scripture:

1. First, Christ rose from the dead (I Corinthians 15:2-23).
2. Next will be the resurrection of the Church age believers at the Rapture (I Thessalonians 4:16).
3. Next will be the resurrection of the two witnesses in the middle of the Great Tribulation. (Revelation 11:11-12)
4. Next will be the resurrection of Old Testament Saints (Isaiah 26:19).
5. Last will be the resurrection of the Tribulation Saints (Revelation 20:4)

There is one more resurrection, and it is for unbelievers only. It happens after the one-thousand-year Millennial Kingdom on earth is completed, and none of these unsaved people will be in the Eternal Order (Revelation 20:13).

NEXT WEEK: REVELATION MSG. XIV

Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments

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