

Parson to Person

1 Corinthians 15

(The Resurrection) – Part 7

“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 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. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ ‘O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, 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 brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

(1 Corinthians 15:50–58)

The fact that Paul clearly documented the physical resurrection of Jesus—and the future physical resurrection of the saints—encouraged him to share some eschatological (end times/last things) insights.

Flesh and Blood

I may be making more of this than needed, but I feel compelled to mention that Paul said *“flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”* However, we know that Jesus was *“flesh and blood”* while serving here in His first incarnational, earthly ministry, but also declared Himself *“flesh and bone”* after His resurrection (see Luke 24:39). Herein we may have a clue and discovery.

We know that Jesus' resurrection body was physical—but altogether different than the one He inhabited prior to His resurrection. We also know that there will be mortals who will dwell on the earth during the Kingdom era (see Isaiah 65:20); but that does not suggest inheritance. Therefore, may I suggest that the term *“flesh and blood”* refers to mortal man but that *“flesh and bone”* may indicate a post-resurrection physical condition—without blood.

Five times in the New Testament we see a reference to *“flesh and blood.”* Each time, *“flesh and blood”* refers to mortal humanity in contrast to that which is spiritual (see Matthew 16:17, 1 Corinthians 15:50, Galatians 1:16, Ephesians 6:12, and Hebrews 2:14).

The Scriptures tell us that the *“life of the flesh is in the blood.”* Moreover, Moses cited God saying *“it is the life of all flesh, its blood sustains its life”* (see Leviticus 17:10–14). However, in the post-resurrected life, it will be the power of God (having transformed us) that sustains us—not blood.

Paul said, *“For since by man [Adam, as flesh and blood] came death, by Man [Jesus] also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive”* (1 Corinthians 15:21–22). Furthermore, Paul said that the natural body *“is sown a natural body, [but] raised a spiritual body”* (1 Corinthians 15:44), and that *“There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, ‘The first man Adam became a living being.’ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven”* (1 Corinthians 15:45–47).

Therefore, we know that the first condition of man is natural and void of the Spirit, but the resurrected condition of the

regenerated is spiritual—physical but spiritually alive and sustained by the life of Jesus.

As believers we are guaranteed an inheritance in Jesus. That inheritance involves the Kingdom. Indeed, *“flesh and blood [will] not inherit the kingdom,”* but the redeemed and resurrected will! Only believers will be resurrected to life, and *“inherit the Kingdom.”*

To the Romans Paul explained, *“if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you”* (Romans 8:11). We will need a physically resurrected, Spirit-sustained body in order to *“inherit the kingdom of God”* and reign with Jesus during His 1000-year physical reign on the earth. Indeed, *“Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years”* (Revelation 20:6). Therefore, *“this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality”* (vs. 53).

When are the Church Age Saints Resurrected?

Paul wrote, *“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”* (vss. 51–52). However, the *“last trumpet”* is a debated and poorly understood expression; multiple misunderstood passages of Scripture have added to the confusion.

Earlier we learned that there are “5 phases of the *‘first resurrection.’* They are as follows: Jesus’ physical resurrection, a number of saints around Jerusalem just after Jesus’ resurrection, the Rapture of the Church at the end of the Church Age, the two prophets who are murdered and resurrected midway through the

Tribulation, and the pre-Church Age and Tribulation saints at the time of the second coming. (See Matthew 28:1–8, Matthew 27:51–54, 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18, Revelation 11:1–12, Daniel 12:1–3 and Revelation 20:4–6)”

As we continue our study, we will discuss the “*mystery*” Paul explained. It is “The Rapture of the Church.” The word rapture comes from Latin “*rapturo*” or “*rapio*” and is a translation of the Greek word “*harpazo*” which means “to be snatched away,” “caught up,” or “taken by force.” It is the removal from one place to another. Therefore, it suggests a removing from the place we are to another place. This “*mystery*” is something previously veiled but now revealed. For this reason, void of careful study and accurate exegesis (interpretation and explanation), the Rapture remains a “*mystery*” to many. In fact, the doctrine of the Rapture is misunderstood and/or rejected altogether by many believers today. Therefore, we will need to take some time to truly understand it.

Over the next few weeks, we will briefly look at these points:

- a. Dispensational Theology and Why It is Important to Biblical Understanding
- b. The Church as Distinct from Israel and the Redeemed from Other Dispensations
- c. The Rapture—What is it?
- d. Purpose of the Tribulation
- e. Purpose of the Rapture
- f. Timing of the Rapture
- g. The Second Coming of Jesus
- h. The Millennial Kingdom—A Literal Physical Reign of Christ
- i. And, whatever otherwise I want to share... LOL

“...my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (vs. 58).

I love you all,
Pastor Paul