***The Church, No. 4

Colossians 1:15-20

COL-127***

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Our subject is "Hymn in Honor of Christ," number 17 in Colossians 1:15-20.

In this hymn, recorded in these verses, the apostle Paul is exalting the Lord Jesus Christ as the head of the body called the church. The church is a special group of believers called out of the mass of humanity related to Jesus Christ as the human head is related to the human body. It's a control element. The church began on the day of Pentecost with the arrival of God the Holy Spirit to the earth to replace the ascended Savior Jesus Christ. The believers on Pentecost in the upper room were baptized by the Holy Spirit. This is a work of the Holy Spirit which never occurred before. No Old Testament Jew was ever baptized by the Holy Spirit. And once the church is gone, this ministry of the Holy Spirit will cease. It began on the day of Pentecost. Its purpose was to fuse together all the believers who were gathered in that upper room into a single unit called the body of Christ. The age of the church will end at the rapture of the church when Jesus Christ returns to meet the dead and living church believers in the air, and immediately escorts them into heaven.

Israel and the church, I remind you again, are two totally separate works of God in His plan of the ages. Israel history is now on hold until the church body is completed and taken to heaven. The church does not replace Israel in any way. God will, after the rapture, then return to completing His program for Israel who are His eternal people, and for whom He has an eternal destiny. He has an eternal nation. The church has a precise place in the order of events relative to the Millennial Kingdom of God. This kingdom is widely discussed and defined in the Old Testament Scriptures as an eternal work of God with the Jewish people. You should not think that the kingdom of the millennium is something that showed up in Revelation chapter 20, and that 1,000-year reign of Christ on this earth. This has been a topic of discussion throughout the Old Testament. And we have, in the past, taken you, book by book, and shown you some of the examples of predicting 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ on this earth by a King Who would be the greater Son of David, born through the lineage of David. And that, of course, is Jesus Christ. This is in the future. It has never been fulfilled. This is clearly, by the literal meaning of the words, an actual kingdom to be erected here on the face of the earth for a literal 1,000-year period. And the Old Testament Scriptures make it clear that Jerusalem will be the world capital, and that the Messiah Savior, Christ, will be the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords over all nations, and over the rulers of those nations. This kingdom is, therefore, in effect, to be a world government ruled over by Jesus Christ.

Mankind's golden age will finally have arrived – an age of peace; of prosperity; of happiness; and, most of all, of righteousness. Just imagine a society where no one, from the highest echelons of government, to the lowest workman on the lot gets away with anything that is unrighteous – the angelic host of God enforcing righteousness. There will be no deceits; no carrying on; and, no pretense that is not exposed for what it is. It is because of that, that the children who will be born during this 1,000-year period, to parents who themselves are believers, will rebel against the King, because they will not be free to exercise (to indulge) the lust patterns of the sin nature. Open rebellion of unrighteousness against the king will be dealt with instantly.

Once the literal method of interpreting prophecy was abandoned in the fourth century A.D., the relationship between Israel and the church, and the Millennial Kingdom were falsified. The reformers picked up the Roman Catholic false doctrine on this subject, and passed it on to their denominational followers to this day. That is why most churches are amillennial, and they couldn't be further away from the truth, and the reality of where history is going to move.

**Historic Premillennialism**

So very briefly, we have pointed out historic premillennialism. "Pre" means that Jesus Christ comes before the Millennial Kingdom begins. The church age is an indefinite period of time, practically 2,000 years now. Then the early church teachers from Scripture made a mistake at this point. They concluded that the tribulation seven-year – they knew that that was going to have to be part of what the Christians went through. Then the rapture would take place. And then Christ would immediately return to the earth with the believers, and the 1,000-year millennium would begin in the new heavens and the new earth. That was historical pre-millennialism.

**Amillennialism**

After Origen, one of the early church teachers, came up with the idea that you should not interpret the Bible literally, but try to find the spiritual meaning of the words, his idea was picked up by in the fourth century by Augustine, one of the all-time great teachers of the Roman Catholic Church. And Augustine, being a Greek, believed that everything material was bad and dirty and filthy and evil, and so Jesus Christ would never reign upon an earthly kingdom. So he spiritualized it, and said that there was going to be the church age. Jesus Christ was going to return. The saints were going to be caught up to meet Him, as per 1 Thessalonians 4. They would go to heaven. And the unbelievers would be put into the lake of fire. And there would be no millennium. That's what the "a" means – there will be no Millennial Kingdom upon this earth whatsoever. That concept then took hold, and was incorporated by the Roman Catholic Church into its official dogma at the council of Ephesus in 431 A.D.

In the 1600s, along came a Unitarian preacher named Quigby, and he conceived of a totally different relationship between the church; the Millennial Kingdom; and, the future. He talked about a church age where the church is expanding; where the church is converting people; and, where the church is getting control of all the nations upon the face of the earth. The earth is being Christianized. Finally, there will come a point when the world has been Christianized. Then there will be 1,000 years of the millennial earth. Christ will not be reigning on earth, but in heaven. That was this kingdom. The throne was spiritualized. At the end of that 1,000 years (that's why it's called post-millennialism – "after"), Jesus Christ will return, and meet the saints in the air, and (like in amillennialism), to heaven or to the lake of fire.

The Protestants loved this because they got away from the Roman Catholic position. And this was part of that age when they thought that man could progressively improve. It was the age when: "Every day, in every way, I'm getting better and better." That was the theme song. And this was a great concept until World War I came along. It blew them out of the water, because it was so brutal. And they said, "Is this man improving?" They thought that, with science and humanism, they were just around the corner from the millennium. And then when World War II came along that finished it. That was the last nail in the coffin. World War II killed them off completely. That was even more brutal than World War I.

So, suddenly post-millennialism went out the door. You had, like in 50 years, one book written on the subject. Nobody could take this seriously. The last dozen years or so, it's had a revival. The devil is afoot. This morning I direct you to what the Bible really teaches.

**Modern Pre-Millennialism**

Modern pre-millennialism is the same thing as historic New Testament pre-millennialism, which, I remind you, went for the first 300 years of the church. No one thought any other concept than: Jesus is going to rule on this earth for 1,000 years, and before He begins that rule, He's going to come back to this earth. The thing they got wrong was that they didn't connect the fact that the tribulation seven years was part of the Jewish dispensation, and it had to do with the Jews, and that they, as Christians, would not be part of that. But this church age (under this diagram) – the church age is interspersed between the age of Israel and the tribulation part of Israel's kingdom. This is what you have to remember.

Here's the age of the Law – the age of the Mosaic Law. It went along. Then God interrupted it, and put in the church age, which has now been almost 2,000 years. When it is finished, and the rapture of the church has taken place, then the Mosaic Law age will resume for its final seven years.

**Intercalation**

One way of describing this is that the church is an "intercalation." It's a technical word: "intercalation" I N T E R C A L A T I O N. Intercalation means something that's interjected in a time period, and it has no connection to what comes before, and it has no connection to what comes after. It's just something that is split, and something else is put in its place for a period of time. This intercalation is what the church age amounts to.

However, from Daniel's timetable, we know that this seven years of Israel's history has never been fulfilled. Old Testament Scripture is very clear about that time schedule. Daniel spells it out, so we know that this is future. The question is: does the church go through that, or is a church taken out of that.

Because of a study movement that arose in the early 1800s in Plymouth, England, a group of believers that called themselves the Plymouth Brethren began a Bible study movement. As a result of their research of Scripture, they realized that, whatever the apostles believed and taught about millennium; the church; and, the relationship of Israel and the church, it was not amillennialism. They knew that. It was very quickly obvious to anybody with half a brain tied behind his back, that you can't find that anywhere in the Scriptures. That was an invention of somebody who didn't like literal interpretation, and who spiritualized the words of Scripture.

Secondly, they knew that certainly there was nothing like post-millennialism because, what the Bible says is that times are going to get worse. Man is going to go downhill, not go uphill and get better. But once evolution came in, then they thought that social progress would always be upward. Well, that's not the case. So, they knew that whatever they possible believed, it certainly wasn't post-millennialism. But they did realize that there was something that the followers of the apostles, as accurately as they had put together Scriptures in those first 300 years, had missed the boat on the relationship of the church and the tribulation period. They didn't follow logically and consistently that what belongs to the dispensation of Israel cannot apply to the dispensation of the church. They are two totally different eras. And that what had happened was that they didn't understand this intercalation period.

In the book of 1 Peter, Peter says that the prophets who wrote in the Old Testament had a problem. They saw the Scripture saying that Jesus Christ is going to return as the suffering Lamb of God. Also, He is going to come back as King of Kings. And Peter says, "How can you be a meek and lowly Lamb and a conquering sovereign king?" And the apostle says, "Well, that's what God says," and they wrote it down. And that's what's in the Old Testament. And Peter said that they could not understand how in the world this can be related.

Well, what they didn't understand was that Jesus Christ does come back as the Lamb of God, which was His First Coming. But there was to be a Second Coming when He would come back as King of Kings. And they were looking this way. They only saw the mountain peaks. So, they thought that the two were at the same time. It was only as Scripture was studied in these Bibles study movements of the Plymouth Brethren that they said, "There's a valley between these two peaks. That's how Christ comes as the Lamb of God the first time, to die for the sins of the world. Then He comes back as conquering King of Kings of the tribe of Judah in the line of David to rule over the world that He has saved. It was very clear and very easy to understand. And now, you can let every word of the Bible mean what it actually says. You don't have to twist and distort it, and try to make it mean something else to fit your theology.

So, this was the condition that finally was solved in a very wonderful way. Jesus Christ was going to return, and when he did, we would meet Christ. Christ was going to return at the end of the church age. When that is, we don't know. There are no signs that tell us when the rapture is near. There *are* signs that tell us when the Second Coming of Christ is near. . . And that's what Jesus referred to when Jesus used the illustration of the fig tree in Matthew 24:32. And He cursed the dead fig tree because it was not bearing fruit when it should have been. He said, "When you see the fig tree bearing and coming back to life (the fig tree in the Bible is a symbol for Israel) – when you see Israel coming back to life (which happened May 17th, 1948), the generation of humanity then living will not pass off the scene until all of the things predicted In the tribulation take place.

So, we know that the Second Coming of Christ is at least seven years away from now, but the return for the rapture could take place before this service is over, because there's nothing that has to be fulfilled before the rapture. But you do have to get mankind willing to be controlled by governments. You do have to have a world where mankind is willing to have a world government over it. You have to have a world where mankind is willing to exchange freedom for security – a socialist economic system. You have to have all of the things that are taking place so rapidly in our world today. And you have to have the technological means to be able to control what people do. I'll blow you out of the water tonight with what the world can do in controlling your every move, and the awareness of everything that you do.

The tribulation is followed by the Second Coming of Christ with His saints. But at the end of the church age, the rapture of 1 Thessalonians 4, Christ meets his believers, dead and alive, in the air. So, this is what we look forward to. We look forward to the day of the rapture. And that could take place, as I say, any moment. And then, when we are gone, time starts ticking off.

Now, logically we can say that the more we see the conditions for the Second Coming in place, you must certainly expect that the rapture has to be just that much nearer. That's true. But you can't pinpoint the time, nor the specific day, and so on.

Okay, here are some Scriptures that we need to walk through that deal with this principle that the saints go and meet Christ in the air. The rapture comes from a Latin word which means "the catching away." John 14:1-4: Jesus, in His upper room discourse, in preparation for the church age, says to the disciples (to the apostles): "Let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in Me. In My Father's house (heaven) are many dwelling places (the new Jerusalem 'abiding' places). If it were not so, I would have told you. For I go to prepare a place for you (a particular dwelling in the new Jerusalem for you). "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again." That's the rapture of the church: "If I go and prepare a place for you (that was His ascension – 40 days after His resurrection) I will come again (that is future – it's the rapture) and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." That is the critical sentence: "When I come back, and I meet you, at this point, it will be so that I can take you to where I am." Where is He? In heaven. He has told us that when He meets us, it will be for the purpose of meeting us in the air, and it's very clear in the Bible that that's what it says, in order to take us where He is, which is heaven – not to take us down to the earth. Got it?

John 14:4, "And you know the way where I am going."

Now let's expand that with 1 Thessalonians 4. Here is a critically informative word on that. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17: "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep (that is, Christians who have died), that you may not grieve as do the rest, who have no hope, as if you're never going to see them again. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus." As Jesus was raised from the dead, so too will all believers who have died be raised again from the dead: "For this we say to you by the Word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord (that is, when the rapture descent of the Lord takes place) His first coming in the end times (His coming to meet us in the air), that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord shall not precede those who have fallen asleep." You will not get in line to go to heaven ahead of the dead Christians. Dead Christians get first place in line to go to heaven. Then come the rest of us who are alive at the time: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with a voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first." All those Christians who are in the grave pop out in their glorified sinless bodies: "Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord."

We who are alive at the time will have our bodies transform instantly. We will never experience physical death, and we will go to heaven along with the believers who have just been resurrected back to heaven with Christ. Now, that is your future. That is the future of every believer in this room. And that cannot be changed. There's nothing that neither you nor even God Himself could change this eternal promise that once you're saved, you're forever secure in that salvation, and your destiny now of being met by Christ in the air is also forever secure.

Let's add to that 1 Corinthians 15:51-52: "Behold I tell you a mystery." Now, you know that the word "mystery" in the Bible means "a secret" – something that was not known before – not revealed: "I tell you a secret. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." Ah-ha. Nobody in the Old Testament ever thought about meeting God – some people without death, and some with death? Now that was a secret. God is going to take a group of people to heaven. Some of them will be taken out of the graves, and some of them alive off the earth. But he says, "Whichever your condition, you will all be changed." The sin nature will completely be removed. You'll no longer have a sin nature. You'll be as Christ – just like Him. Your every move will be that of absolute righteousness: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye (the batting of an eyelash), at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. It is imperishable because we don't have a sin nature. We'll no longer be subject to death.

So, that is this point in time right here. The church age is over. We're caught up, living and dead, to meet Christ in the air. And He turns around, and we go back up to heaven with Him. There we have an important moment for us to face, which will be the Judgment Seat of Christ. But meantime, back here on earth, the seven-year tribulation kicks in. This is the end of the age of the Jews (the dispensation of the Jews). And it is now completed. – seven years completing the period of the Law. Here's where the historic early Bible teachers made the mistake. The church is in heaven, not here on this earth. The church is out of this terrible scene of the tribulation. Okay, let's look at a few Scriptures that established that for us.

First of all, Romans 5:9: "Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him." The ultimate expression of the wrath of God will take place here during the tribulation. This is when the environmentalists are going to freak out. All nature will go berserk. The interstellar bodies will go berserk. Fresh and saltwater turns to blood. There are catastrophic earthquakes, and movement of the earth's surfaces. There are all kinds of disease. Destruction takes place. And nobody can do a thing about it. That's the final expression of the wrath of God. And Paul says, "You Christians are not going to face the wrath of God relative to your sin. That's been taken care of. And you'll not face the wrath of God in any way, which is His judgment upon sin, because you're not guilty anymore.

Let's add to that 1 Thessalonians 1:10, "To wait for His Son from heaven, Whom He raised from the dead (that is, Jesus), Who delivers us from the wrath to come." Now here it's a little more explicit. It's not only the wrath of God against someone who is unsaved. That has been taken care of. This is a wrath which is to come upon mankind – a specific point in time. He's talking about the tribulation wrath. That is the ultimate wrath of God. And he says, "You Christians – you're excluded from that."

Then the Holy Spirit closes in even more specifically. 1 Thessalonians 5:9: "For God has not destined us (church-age believers) for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." That is very, very clear. 1 Thessalonians 1:10 and 1 Thessalonians 5:9 – God has not destined us for a period of wrath. We're out of that.

To this, we should add the admonition of Luke 21:36: "But keep on the alert at all times, praying in order that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man." Stay on the alert. For us, the alert is the rapture of the church.

There are other indications to that end. In Revelation 3:10, it says, relative to the Philadelphia church, it will be kept (it says very explicitly) from the period of tribulation (trial). But this is the basic concept that the Plymouth Brethren discovered. The church does not go through the wrath of God of the tribulation. The whole period belongs to Israel, not to the church. What the church has is a hope (a great hope) – the hope of escaping all this. That hope is described in a variety of ways.

Please notice Titus 2:13: "Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ." Now, how illogical is it to say that the blessed hope that we're looking forward to is the appearing of Jesus Christ, and to turn around and take us down to the earth so we can go through the tribulation? Do you think from your knowledge of what is happening in the tribulation that that is a blessed hope? Not likely.

How about 1 John 3:2-3: "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself just to He is pure." What is our hope? Our hope is not tribulation. Our hope is to see Jesus Christ at the rapture, and instantly to be changed into His image, so that we have a glorified body and a glorified personality, free of all the sin nature effects. That is the hope that we're fixed upon. And his point is: if that's what you're going to end up as, why don't you live with integrity as a Christian that is appropriate to your ultimate destiny of being like Christ. Start imitating Him now.

One more in 1 Peter 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." What is described for us in terms of the return of Christ is a hope to come back to life. Now, that is certainly, in its ultimate expression, for those who are in the grave, but probably most of us could say that we have a few things physically we'd like fixed up. There are a few things physically that our living bodies could use. And that living hope includes the complete, absolute perfection restoration of the physical body, and every defect; every unpleasantness; and, every physical ailment, whatever it is that you live with now, in an instant, it's going to be gone. And you are going to have a body with the perfection of Jesus Christ, and one that can never again be contaminated by the devastating effects (the degenerative effects) of sin.

So, the church does not go through the tribulation. That would be contradictory to the concept of hope in all of these aspects that the Bible portrays that we can look forward to.

Christ and His body, the church, will return to this earth at the Second Coming at the end of the seven-year period of the tribulation. Then Jesus Christ will separate the sheep from the goats among the gentiles: those who are saved, and those who are unsaved. Those who are lost will be put to death. Then He will take Israel out to the wilderness (those who are left of the nation), and He'll put them under the rod of judgment, and He'll separate the saved Jews from the unsaved Jews, and put the unsaved Jews to death. Then He will escort the saved Jews into the Millennial Kingdom. He will escort the saved gentiles into the Millennial Kingdom. All of us Christians will be there with Christ, standing by to execute the judgment and the government of the Millennial Kingdom. And suddenly, at one point in history, everybody will be born again. That's how the millennium begins. Man's golden age begins with everyone born again.

Children who are born during that 1,000-year period will form the rebellious group that joins Satan who, during the 1,000 years, is bound. He will be released, and he can rally a great number of human beings who will once more rise to rebel against Christ the King.

At the end of the tribulation, this is where the great white throne judgment takes place, where all unsaved mankind is finally judged, and they enter into the destiny that they have for them. Then the Millennial Kingdom begins on earth – world government, and a government that is under the control of Jesus Christ.

This is what Satan, in the temptation in the wilderness, offered to Christ. He said, "If you bow down and worship me, look at these nations. I'll make you the King, just like that. You won't have to suffer. No cross. None of that. I'll make you the King. And that's exactly what Christ was being offered. That's the very reason He came to this earth. The Jews rejected the kingdom. Now it's postponed. The church age has come in, but it will be restored to them at this point. Christ will be the leader of the world.

However, all of this is based upon literal interpretation of prophecy. And I going to tell you right now that no amillennialist and no post-millennialist ever denies that if you have to interpret the Bible literally, this is what it teaches – modern premillennialism.

When I took a course on pre-millennialism with Dr. Walvoord at Dallas Theological Seminary, we did not study a book on premillennialism. We studied the finest book, probably still one of the best of the Reformed theologians, defending amillennialism, by Oswald Allis. And we went through that book, and took every one of his arguments, and showed where he was fallacious in Scripture, or some other logical inconsistency. And then I was startled one day to read in Allis's book, the prince of defenders of amillennialism – that if it is necessary to interpret the Bible literally with the words meaning what they say, then premillennialism is what the Bible teaches. Then he proceeded to show how you don't have to interpret the Bible literally, but you seek the spiritual significance of the Word. His whole book was answered by himself right there. And that's still true today. If you take the Bible literally – so it gets back to that, doesn't it? If you take the Bible for what it says (for what the words say), this is the way the picture falls together, perfectly. There is no contradiction. It fits in. But if you want some other system, then you have to spiritualize. You can't talk about a kingdom on earth. You have to talk about a kingdom of heaven. You can't talk about David's throne being filled by Christ here on earth. You have to talk about a throne in heaven. It all has to get spiritual meaning. It cannot be literal.

Well, of course, where does that end? Well, the liberals take it to the end of destroying salvation by grace. The liberals take it to destroying salvation by the substitution of Jesus Christ. They say those are symbols. That doesn't really mean that. The words don't really mean that. They have a spiritual meaning. And, of course, the whole Bible then is destroyed. It has no meaning whatsoever. Everybody's idea is whatever you want it to be.

So, we stand unequivocally on a biblical position, which is the dispensational, premillennial rapture, pre-tribulation view of Scripture, and arrival of Jesus Christ. We have a pre-tribulation view of prophecy.

**The Rapture**

Here are the mechanics of the rapture. Let's tie it up. The rapture of the church is based upon 1 Thessalonians 4, which we read just a moment ago. This is the way it will happen. And I want to tie this together because, again, I have to remind you, every church in town, practically, is saying, "Wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong. That's not true – what you're saying at Berean Church this morning, because they're all amillennialists. Some of them are post-millennialists. Only a few are premillennialists.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 indicates that the time comes when God the Father turns to His Son who now shares – by the way, the Bible says that He shares in heaven a throne, but whose thrown? He sits upon the Father's throne, not upon the throne of His son David. It's very clearly the Father's throne. The Father turns to the Son and says, "It's time to go." Up to this time, Christ, in His humanity, doesn't know the time of the rapture. In his deity, He does. But there are those two natures – the hypostatic union difference.

So Christ rises. He descends to earth in a cloud. And, as 1 Thessalonians 4:14 indicates, He meets the believers in the air: those who have died; and, those who are alive on the earth. Now, this is exactly what was predicted in Acts 1. Let me direct you back to that again. In Acts 1:9-11, when Jesus, after 40 days following the crucifixion, ascended to heaven: "And after he had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold two men in white clothing stood beside them (angels), and they also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, Who was taken up from you into heaven will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven. He will come down on a cloud." This will take place at the rapture.

This will be accompanied by an audible command to the dead and living Christians on the earth given by Christ in 1 Thessalonians 4:16. He will shout; call their attention; and, the trumpet will sound. Who's going to hear the trumpet? You'll hear it. All Christians will hear it. The world will not. It's a signal to us, not to anybody else. The archangel then will also proclaim the call. And all Christians will rendezvous together in space (1 Thessalonians 4:17), caught up to meet the Lord in the air. In a moment, the body of the dead Christians will be reunited with their spirits and souls, and they will rise into the air. The living Christians will follow the dead Christians to meet the Lord in the air, as 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 indicate.

There will be a mighty transformation physically as per 1 Corinthians 15:51-52: "Behold, I tell you a secret, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed." So, all of us will get that glorified body just like Christ. We will be transformed totally into His image, Romans 8:29 tells us. We will have sinless perfection. The sin nature will be forever removed. Our mortal bodies will be changed into immortal bodies. They will never be able to die, because they will never be subject to sin again.

Philippians 3:20-21: "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who will transform the body of our humbled state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself."

You and I will retain our present appearance. (Bad luck.) But we will no longer be subject to illness, pain, fatigue, suffering, sorrow, or aging. We will no longer be subject to the laws of nature. We will soar through space at the speed of light. We will go through solid objects. And all of this was demonstrated by Christ in His resurrection.

Now there will be no end to the speculation left back here on earth after we go, and the tribulation period begins – on whatever happened to us. At that point, New Age religion, which is Hinduism in Western garb, will simply report that the Christians, who couldn't learn their lesson and get with it with the new times, have been transported to another plane (another level), where they're going to be reeducated. The world will pull itself together, and it will go on under their wonderful leader, the antichrist.

Meanwhile, you and I will be in heaven, and we will be at the Judgment Seat of Christ. One-by-one, the records are opened. This was your spiritual gift. This was your life. This was your mission. And you'll be rewarded, or you'll suffer eternal loss in terms of rewards according to the degree to which you fulfilled your mission. If you cannot fulfill your mission at some point in life, bingo! It's a moment-by-moment, day-by-day, lifelong operation. But some Christians have a lot of making up time to do. If you have any inkling, which you should, of your spiritual gift, it is very serious business not to get into the job of exercising it. That's what's going to be taking place in heaven during the seven-year tribulation period. And then we will see where we stand. Why not make it a big finish?

Father, we thank You for this, Your Word, and we thank You for the instruction.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)