

1Corinthians 19-01-06b

Let's resume our study now, beautiful, special by the way. Christ the solid rock. All other ground is sinking sand.

And all other things to which people commonly resort for their confidence and for their security truly do end up being unstable and of short duration. We're so privileged to have these promises and the revealed plan and purpose of God to stabilize us and keep our house from shifting. I don't even like to see a crack in the drywall, much less have the whole thing go sliding as they do in Malibu and other places into the sea.

I don't know why people build where they do. They think it's a great view, but you know, have you ever seen the videos of some of those falling off the cliff into the ocean? It's, I hope your insurance is paid up. We resume our study now in 1 Corinthians 15 and Paul says here, I am going to tell you a secret.

I'm going to reveal a mystery. And in the Greek world, the ancient Greek culture, the Roman world of his time, these were things that were not commonly known. You had to be in the right place at the right time to know a mystery.

And Paul had been in the right place at the right time. And these things had been revealed to him by God. And he has permission.

He doesn't always have permission. Apostles and inspired writers are not always allowed to tell what they know. Sometimes it is for them alone.

Daniel was in that category. John in Revelation is in that category. Paul in some areas of his knowledge and experience is in that category.

But this is one that he is free to share. And he says, pay attention. That's what behold means.

Look, I'm going to tell you something you don't know. This is something Paul did not share with them evidently while he was with them. We know that he spent upwards of two years in Corinth, but this is fresh news.

I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. We will not all experience death, but we will all be transformed.

And this actually bears a relationship to the argument that has just preceded. It isn't reanimation. Otherwise those who are still alive wouldn't have to undergo a change.

It is transformation. It is an upgrade. It is the enhanced deluxe 2.0 version of bodily existence.

Now, he is going to go into some details here and he does it in another place as you're well aware. There are two other places where Paul talks about the resurrection in some detail.

Never again as detailed as here.

But he talks about resurrection in 2 Corinthians. Evidently there were still some questions. Nothing wrong with questions.

Paul is gonna flesh out some additional details. And before we go into this very familiar passage that we identified with the rapture, let's take a look at these other two treatments. So turn a few pages forward to 2 Corinthians chapter four.

And we're going to pick up in verse 16. He has been talking about his ministry as an apostle, sharing the gospel. Back up in verse two, we've renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, not handling the word of God deceitfully, but manifestation of the truth.

And by that we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. If you want to commend the truth to people's conscience, give them the word of God. It's not debate.

It's not apologetics. It's not the superlative way that you couch an argument. It isn't faulty handling of the word of God, deceitful handling of the word of God, but manifesting the truth, making the word of God clear, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

And if the gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. It's not veiled because you didn't do a good enough job. It's not veiled because if you had only said it differently or only said it at a different time or in a different way, or if you, it isn't on you.

Your hands are free of anyone's blood. When Paul talks about his hands being clean, it has nothing to do with, well, if you don't share the gospel with everybody that you suspect might not be a Christian, you're gonna have their blood on your hands. This is a common belief in a lot of denominations, and it is just such an incredible distraction.

It's the devil's own work to get people worried about whether or not they assaulted someone with the gospel. How do you share the gospel? You make sure that your speech is seasoned with salt, that you speak the truth. It is the unvarnished, undeceitful presentation of the word of God manifesting the truth.

That's what commends itself to consciences. It says, we commend ourselves not by what we say or what we do or who we are or where we succeeded or where we failed. The commendation comes from handling the word of God rightly, rightly dividing the word of truth, letting the word of God rebuke, correct, instruct, provide doctrine.

If the gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are already perishing, whose minds the God of this world has already blinded. Why would their minds be blinded? Why would God allow this? Peter says, it's not the will of God that any should perish, but that all come to repentance. So how could the God of this world blind a mind? Well, if it's not the will of God that any perish and yet people perish, who's got the power of death? The Lord Jesus destroys him who has the

power of death, that's Satan, right? How can Satan do anything except by God's permission? So why would God permit the God of this world to blind someone's mind? Why would he allow that? Scripture says, it's not the will of God that any perish.

And yet the gospel is veiled to those who are perishing. If it's not God's will, then how can it happen? If you're a Calvinist, it can't happen. It is not the will of God that any should perish.

And they say, well, that's any of the elect. It doesn't say any of the elect and there's nothing about the elect anywhere in the context. It is not the will of God that any should perish.

God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him will not perish. So if somebody is perishing, how does that happen? If it's not God's will and Jesus came so that anyone should not perish, what is the key there? How can somebody be perishing if it's not God's will? God has so arranged the world he created by assigning human creatures free will and respecting the choice that they make, balancing factors, God is just and fair. God is not gonna let somebody be so swayed by heredity or environment or happenstance or failure on somebody else's part that they cannot properly choose.

It's just inconsistent with the character of God. God is just, he is the standard of righteousness. He is light and in him is no darkness at all.

So if someone is perishing, you know why they're perishing? They have chosen to perish. Read Romans 1. They know him as God, but they do not honor him as God. That's a choice.

The truth is revealed, but they suppress that truth in unrighteousness, that's a choice. How can it be that it is not the will of God that any perish and yet some perish? We're talking about death and resurrection here, right? Well, how can it be that some are gonna perish and essentially not rise to eternal life? There's a great swath of the human race past, present and future that is not gonna go into God's kingdom. Why? It's not God's will that they perish, but they perish.

Why? Well, it is a choice and once someone has made that choice, and has suppressed the truth in unrighteousness, what happens? The God of this age blinds their minds. Who gets blinded? What does the verse say? Who is blinded by the God of this world? Who do not believe. Which came first, the blinding or the not believing? The God of this age blinds the minds of those who do not believe.

There is a time of clarity, there is a time of revelation, there's a time of perception of the truth, that there is a God and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, Hebrews 11.6, Romans 1. They know Him as God, but they choose not to glorify Him and they choose not to be thankful. They become empty in their imagination and their foolish hearts become darkened. They make the choice, then follows vanity and darkness.

What is the vanity and darkness? It is from the God of this world. Based on their choice, God says, you don't choose to honor me as God, you don't choose to be thankful to me as God, you have by default chosen the God of this world, you're His. He's got you now.

What is He gonna do as His first act? He's going to blind their minds. The God of this world has blinded the minds of them who believe not. The believing not is the cause, the darkness, the blindness, and the vanity are the effect.

If you do not opt out of darkness, you will not be transferred into light. God offers the opportunity, He has sent His Son to die for it, He has put His earnest on the table. Nobody asked for Jesus to come and die for sins, nobody asked that there be a way of redemption, God made it proactively.

God moved first, God came first and established the ground of salvation and made the offer, now it is time for response. Jesus came not to bring peace, but a sword. Why? Because when He comes, He is either the rock upon which people fall for salvation, or He is the rock that falls on them and grinds them to powder.

Which is it gonna be? We choose. The rock is the rock, you choose whether to be on top of it, the solid rock, or underneath it, and ground out of existence, one or the other. So what does He say? Whose minds the God of this age have blinded who do not believe, it says lest.

Well, it sounds like the God of this world has blinded the minds otherwise they would believe. It's the other way around. Why does the God of this world blind their minds? Otherwise the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

He is the image of God. Hasn't Paul just been talking about, we now bear the image of the first man of dust, and we are going to bear the image of the heavenly? What image does he bear? Jesus is the image of the Father, He's the fullness of deity in bodily form, He bears the image of God, we are gonna bear His image, we are going to reflect the glory of God. Some of us more so, some of us less so.

Star differs from star in glory. How fully do we reflect the image? The first Adam was made in the image of God. Male and female in His image, He created them.

In His image. The image was lost in the fall, it was a choice. God didn't go down and corrupt Eve and threw her at Him.

This was the serpent, this was Satan. Whose minds the God of this age has blinded, who do not believe lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. It isn't the blinding that prevents the gospel shining, it is the disbelief.

Persistent disbelief removes the light. Look at the order here. Whose minds the God of this age has blinded, who do not believe lest the light.

You could take that comma out before lest. Who do not believe lest the light shine on them. Men love darkness rather than light when their deeds are evil.

Remember that in John 1? So what happens? If you don't like the light, you will disbelieve and

push it away, otherwise the light of Christ who is the image of God will shine. And what happens when the image of God, when the glory of God is present? What do people typically do when they're in the presence of God? I am sinful. I am a man of unclean lips.

Depart from me, I am a sinful man, Peter. When he realized that the Lord Jesus was the son of God, he said, he saw the fish and he didn't even reel them in. He said, you are the son of God and I'm not worthy to be in your presence.

It is the image of God creates acknowledgement of sin. We recognize the distance, the gulf between us and God. This is what transformation is going to fix.

We will no longer be of dust. We will be of the substance of heaven. We will be qualified.

What does Jude say in verse 24? He is able to present you faultless before the throne of his glory with exceeding joy. We won't be on our face saying, I'm sinful. I'm not qualified to be here.

He is able to present us faultless. Well, we can't be like this and be faultless. We would be incinerated.

We are inherently corrupt. He will transform us. Well, he introduces that in the first part of chapter four, but look down at verse 16.

Therefore we do not lose heart even though our outward man is perishing. This outward man is perishing. The inward, notice man is in italics there here and in Corinthians.

These are actually helpful. They are reflecting Greek sentence construction that really does help. Yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

What is the inward? That's the part of us that is going to go forward and be overclothed with a new immortal body. You will be you. I will be I. We will be us.

We are the same person, but we are overclothed. We are transformed, but that's the body, right? What does scripture tell us? Be not conformed to this world, Romans 12, two. What does he say? What's Romans 12, one and two? You remember it? I beseech you brethren by the mercies of God that you do what? Present your souls.

Present your spirits. What does he say? Presents your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable. That's this earthly life, right? Why does he say body? Why doesn't he say present your hearts? Present your conscience.

Present your mind. He doesn't even say present yourselves. He says present your bodies.

Why? This is the man of dust. And we recognize that this and everything that it is a part of is passing away. And we are going to that which is heavenly.

Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. And be not conformed to this world, the ball of dust, the man of dust, but be ye transformed, how? By the renewing of your mind. Find out what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God, right? So there is an inner man, Paul says here, that is being renewed day by day, transformed, prepared, going to inhabit the resurrection body that is going to inhabit the heavenlies.

The kingdom of the Father. Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. First Corinthians 15, different kinds of glory.

What is the weight of glory? Well, the glory of this earth is one thing, the glory of the next is another. So our afflictions work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we do not look at the things which are seen, the man of dust, the ball of dust, the world of dust, this which is, as Peter says, is all going to go up in a great elements melting with a fervent heat, but the things which are not seen, the things which are seen, temporary, the things which are not seen, eternal.

This is all of a piece, it's the same fabric. We're just picking out different parts of the embroidery on this wonderful tapestry here. Keep going in chapter five.

We know that if our earthly house, tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Same subject, right? In this house, this world, this first Adam context, we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven. We're ready to move up, we're ready to be transformed, we are ready to enter into that wonderful future existence.

If indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. Now what does that mean? If you've made no investment in the heavenly future and it comes time to be issued your resurrection body, that thing could be so thin and so transparent that there's not much there. Your glory is gonna be very dim.

And he says, we groan earnestly desiring to be clothed with the habitation from heaven. What if you've done nothing to prepare? What if you've made no investment in the eternal future? Well, what happens when you're naked? People have this dream, I've never had this dream, but I understand people dream it all the time where you're suddenly, you find yourself in a room and you don't have your clothes on. What is the emotion that is felt? What is the reaction to that realization? It's shame, right? You're embarrassed, it's embarrassment.

It's, I wanna get out of here, I don't want anybody looking at me because I look a whole lot better in clothes than I do out of them. I don't think very many people think, boy, I just wish people could see me in the all together, they would be so impressed. Nobody in their right mind feels that way.

There may be a few exceptions, but they're not godly. Indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. People that may not be looking too much forward to the eternal future are

those who have made no investment in it and aren't prepared.

And that upgrade isn't going to prevent embarrassment. It says in another place, that ye be not ashamed at his coming. People think, oh, it's all gonna be glory.

No, there's gonna be, and I would say probably a majority of us as believers who have the potential to be ashamed at his coming. What happens at his coming? What's the first thing that happens at his coming? Voice of the archangel, trump of God, dead in Christ's rise. We are changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, we're gonna see that here in a second.

First thing that happens is we get the upgrade. First thing that happens is body. If you're gonna be ashamed at his coming, you know why? You're gonna look at the resurrection body and say, I did not prepare.

I am not dressed for the occasion. I am not wearing the glory-reflecting body and robe of righteousness that I ought to have. Well, it is too late then to run back to the closet and change.

I looked down at my jacket this morning and I had a great big, you can't see it because I'm hiding behind the laptop, but I got a giant spill on the front of my coat. Well, if I'd have seen that, I'd have gone back and changed. I've got another blue coat, doesn't have a gravy stain on the front.

But it's too late now, isn't it? Excuse me, I'll be right back. Let me run up the hill and I'll be back in about seven and a half minutes with my other coat. Can't do that now.

You cannot go back and change this life. This is Paul's point, that you be not found naked. For we who are in this tent grown being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but we want to be further clothed, overclothed.

We want the enhancement that mortality may be swallowed up by life. Remember Paul's point that I mentioned in verse 38 in 1 Corinthians 15. What is it that the moron leaves out of his calculations? God.

What does he say here? Now, he who has prepared us for this very thing is God. God does this. It's a God thing.

It's in God's hands. It's God's plan. It's God's mechanism.

It's God's way. It is God's purpose. And in light of that, he has given us the spirit as a guarantee, as a pledge.

It's a down payment. It's an earnest. He's given us the earnest of the spirit.

How do you know that you're coming back and that God is going to raise us and there's going to be glory and such involved? It's the earnest of the spirit. Well, how much of a reality is the spirit? It's a choice, right? Otherwise, we wouldn't have the exhortation to be not drunk with

wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the spirit. Our sense of the spirit, our susceptibility to the spirit, the influence that the spirit has in our lives is a choice.

So, do you want to know what the resurrection is going to be like? Well, how real is the spirit? Because the earnest is the pledge of what it's going to be like. And if you don't have much of a sense of the presence and power of the spirit, guess what? There's not going to be much of a presence and power in the resurrection. The spirit is the earnest.

The spirit is the current expression of what it's going to be. So, what's the suggestion? Let's get filled with the spirit. Let's cultivate the presence of the spirit.

Let's clear the room so that the spirit is comfortable and talkative and guides us and illuminates us and leads us into all truth and communicates our prayers in an effective way and communicates God's replies in an effective way. In essence, Paul says here, if you want a preview of what the resurrection is going to be like, look at the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit in your life right now. The spirit has come from heaven to illuminate and energize the man of dust.

And to the extent that he's able to do that, that's the extent to which we will not be found naked in the resurrection. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God. You have to allow yourself to be prepared.

You've got to put yourself in the position to be prepared. You've got to make this kind of a priority. God does the preparation.

God does the transformation. God does the assignment. God determines based on his justice and his righteousness where he is going to honor faith and patience and obedience and assign the opportunity for glory.

It's a God thing. So we are always confident knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. We're dwelling in the earthly tent.

We're in the man of dust mode, but we're confident. We walk by faith, not by sight. Verse eight, we are confident.

Yes, well-pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. Now, pregnant words there. Absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

This is where people get the entire understanding of an intermediate state. Believer passes away, leaves the body, suspended in some heavenly sphere and present with the Lord. There is no scripture support for an intermediate state, intermediate existence, disembodied flotation whatsoever.

And you can't read it in here. What has Paul just got through saying? Verse four, we who are in this tent, this body grown, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed. Now, if there

were an intermediate state where you are unclothed, you are disembodied, but you're with the Lord, why would you not want that? There's a lot of us that have got aches and pains and debilities in our body and it would be a fantastic thing to leave the crippled body behind and suspend in whatever sort of a state with the Lord.

How would you not want to be with the Lord? Paul says, we don't want to be unclothed. Why? Because there is no unclothed state where you're with the Lord. We leave this body.

We are pleased rather to be absent. When he says from the body, that's absent from this body. So we make it our aim, verse nine, whether present or absent, to be well-pleasing to Him.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that each one may receive the things done in the body. So what body is he talking about here? When he says absent from the body, that's this body. And we're gonna be judged based on what we do in this body.

What do you do in dust world as dust man? That judgment is going to determine the nature of the resurrection, the quality of the resurrection, the opportunities and the potential in the resurrection, the privileges in the resurrection, the inheritance in the resurrection is determined by what you do in this body. According to what he has done, whether good or bad, it's coming up. God will judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, he says in another place.

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men. We are well-known to God and I trust are well-known in your consciences. Now go over to Thessalonians.

First Thessalonians chapter four, very familiar passage, parallel concepts to what we're studying this morning. Whenever you wanna talk about the rapture, you immediately dive over to verse 13. First Thessalonians 4.13. I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep.

But the concept begins at verse one. Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God. That's the context for verse 13 and following.

We urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus, you need to abound, you need to be strong, you need to be developing yourself as a wonderfully potent seed here so that when you are planted, you're going to come up as a wonderfully potent and powerful and glorious new life. You know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. This is the will of God, your sanctification, your set-apartness, your distinct dedication to God.

That's sanctification, right? You dedicate wholly to the Lord. Set apart to the Lord. Abstain from sexual immorality.

Possess your vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God. The Gentiles who leave God out of the picture. We should live every day

remembering it's all about God.

I was listening to a guy, young, younger, everybody's getting to be younger than me now, and I got a ways to go yet. My mother would tell you everybody's younger than her at this point, but there's quite a few people younger than me even now. But I was listening to a guy, younger, and he was making a really good point and I enjoyed it.

He said, you know, we tend to read ourselves into the scriptures. He gave the illustration of David and Goliath and we say, you know, we're David and we've got to have faith and get our five smooth stones and what are our five rocks and this, that, and the other. And he said, we have a real subjective and myopic view of scripture and we keep reading ourselves into it.

We go to Daniel's three friends and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and we keep saying, you know, we've got to be strong and endure the fire and not lose faith and all the rest of it. And he said, you know what people keep leaving out? Scripture is not primarily about you. It's about God.

What does David say about the whole Goliath thing? You're defying the armies of the living God. God is going to deliver you into my hand. The David and Goliath story is partly about David and his faith, but it's mainly about God.

The fourth man in the flame is mainly about God. It's God's ability to flame proof those guys. God is in the picture.

And I thought he made a good point. You can't go so far in that direction that you ignore the encouragement that we have to dare to be a Daniel and that sort of thing, to be strong and have a good courage and be not afraid. But we do sometimes forget that scripture is about God and what God does and that faith is rewarded with God's power and the fulfillment of God's plan and God's purpose.

And without that, you can put faith in a busted chair, but as soon as you sit on it, it's gonna break. The merit of faith is in the object. And that was really his point.

The merit of faith is in the object. That's something I learned from Bob Thieme way, way back. And it's sterling golden truth from the word of God.

The merit of our faith is not in us. That's why faith is not a work. The goodness and the quality and the results of faith are because we are trusting the right thing.

We are trusting the right God and the promises of God. So that's what he's saying here. You know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

This is the will of God. Gentiles in verse five do not know God. Don't take advantage of your brother.

The Lord is the avenger of all such. Verse seven, God did not call us to uncleanness, but in

holiness. Therefore he who rejects does not reject man, but God who has given us his Holy Spirit.

Do you notice how many times he concentrates on God here? It's God that counts. It's our life before God. It is our exploitation of the gift of the Holy Spirit that matters.

Concerning brotherly love, I have no need to write, so I have no need to read. Skip down to verse 13. I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

Those who have no hope, sorrow, Paul says, if you know what you're supposed to know, you won't sorrow in that way. Doesn't mean you won't have sorrow. There's a perfectly godly type of sorrow, but it is not a hopeless sorrow.

For we, if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with him those who sleep in Jesus. Same idea as 1 Corinthians 15, right? Christ is raised and he's the first fruits of those that sleep. Because Christ is raised, we will be raised.

Jesus said that during his earthly ministry. He said, because I live, you will live also. He will bring with him those who sleep in Jesus.

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord. Don't overlook that phrase. Paul isn't talking out of his turban here.

He's not talking out of his prayer shawl. He's not speaking out from under the hat. This is the word of the Lord.

We who are alive and remain to the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. Consistent over and over again, believers are pictured as asleep. You can't be hanging on a thread in front of the holy throne of God if you are asleep.

How much perception of what's going on around you or in the world do you have when you are asleep? You have none. They are asleep. The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first." There's been a whole dead sea of ink spilt about this trumpet.

Is it the last trumpet that John speaks of in the Revelation, and therefore believers will go through the Tribulation period, and when the seventh trumpet sounds, that's when the rapture takes place? No, and again I say no. How do I know this? A, Revelation had not been written when Paul wrote these words, so nobody would have the first clue about there being seven trumpets, or seven seals, or seven vials, or seven thunders, certainly not the seven trumpets. B, if you go look at those trumpets in Revelation, that last trumpet sounds for something measured in days.

This trumpet goes off, and in the twinkle of an eye a whole bunch of stuff happens. It's a short

blast. It's not a long protracted thing like the seventh trumpet in Revelation.

You can't make that connection. It's not like there's only ever been one trumpet blown in Israel. They only ever picked up the ram's horn once.

You use the trumpet for all kinds of things. Remember how many times they blew the trumpets marching around Jericho? Remember how many times the trumpets were sounded in Israel for the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Trumpets, ten days later the Day of Atonement? There's trumpets all over the place. You can use a trumpet more than once.

This is a specific trumpet for a specific group called to a specific event, and it doesn't even say that it is the last trumpet. It says it's the trumpet of God. Don't miss how often Paul points to God in these discussions.

This isn't just a happy angelic trumpet. It's not some elder blowing. It's the trumpet of God.

You're not going to get raised until God's trumpet is sounded, and it is the voice of an archangel. I only know the names of two archangels. Paul doesn't name which one here, but it's only one angel.

It's not a multitude of the heavenly host praising God. It's an archangel. An angel is going to say something.

Now, why do you have an archangel speaking? Why wouldn't Jesus give a triumphant shout? Why wouldn't God speak, this is my beloved son. Watch out you're about to join him in the air. Be not afraid, or something.

Why is it an archangel? Where are archangels? Where do they typically exist? What did Gabriel say when he came down to make the announcement about John and about Jesus? I have come from the presence of God. I've been sent from the presence of God. Archangels are in the presence of God the Father.

The archangels are in the presence of God the Father. And those who say the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament is Jesus, miss the point that God the Father, in his absolute unapproachable glory, is going to send angels to speak in his name, and with his message, and in the first person on his behalf. Why does an archangel speak? Because the command of the Father.

And God the Father doesn't even lean over to Jesus at his right hand and say, it's time. He uses his standard protocol. He calls the archangel that communicates his will and he says, it's time.

The archangel speaks and Jesus heads down to collect us. There is order. There is function.

There is sequence. There is purpose in what God does. And the archangel is not mentioned here just as sort of a detail.

It tells us that this timing comes from God the Father. Jesus in scripture never sends an archangel anywhere. Archangels come from the throne, come from God the Father.

This is initiated by God. How many times does Paul have to point out, this resurrection, transformation, future is a God thing. It's under God's control.

It is God's designation. It's his purpose. It's his plan.

It's his son that he implements it in and through. But it's God. We owe it all to God.

Jesus said, I'm the way, the truth, and the life, so that you can come to God. Even Jesus is not an end in himself. So the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel.

The voice of the archangel is going to shout and say, it is time. And the Lord Jesus is going to descend with that voice sounding and with the trumpet of God. Now a trumpet is an assembly call.

The voice of the archangel gives the command. The trumpet calls the attention of a group. That's what trumpets are for.

You don't blow a trumpet at one guy. You don't blow the trumpet at Jesus and say, toot, go down. It just makes no sense.

A trumpet calls the attention of a group. So there's going to be the voice of the archangel. I'm not sure if we will hear that voice or not.

The Lord Jesus is going to descend with that shout, that voice. But then there is the trumpet of God. And when the trumpet sounds, that is the assembly call.

The dead in Christ are going to rise. Notice he described them as sleeping in Jesus in verse 14. Now they rise and they rise first.

Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. The living are caught up together with the dead who have risen and that group together, living and formerly dead, ascend to meet the Lord in the air. Now this is the other thing, and you've heard me say this many times in the past, but it makes absolutely no sense whatsoever that if the dead are awake and disembodied and suspended in some intermediate state, that when God issues the command through the archangel and the Lord Jesus is going to come and collect church age believers, if these people are already in his presence, why do they not come with him? Paul doesn't say he will bring with him those who sleep in Jesus in the sense that they, he wouldn't even say they're asleep.

He said those who have been waiting in the wings all this time will return with him. Why would they rise? Okay, all you people sitting before the throne and waiting for these years in the presence and don't have a body yet, you're in between your old body and your new body, but

you're kind of enjoying the holy glow or whatever. Okay, everybody go get in the ground and when you hear the trumpet, pop up and come back up into the air to be back with me again.

It just doesn't make any sense whatsoever and scripture never says that. There is no support for any intermediate state. Consistently every time you see it referenced, those who have passed away in the Lord are asleep.

They are unaware. This is not soul sleep in the sense that well, there's some room where all of these souls are wrapped up in their wool blankets or whatever. It is language of accommodation.

There is no need to continue through time once you have spent your time and those people close their eyes at the end of their life and when they open them, they have gone forward however far directly, do not pass go, do not collect \$200. God just picks up the piece and puts it on the current time square and it doesn't travel around the board and it doesn't have to stay in contact with time and physicality here. You move through time when you die, God picks you up and puts you right at the sound of the trumpet, the voice of the archangel and you rise.

Those people are instantaneously transferred from whatever day and whatever hour and whatever year that they breathe their last to the day and the hour that they breathe their first in their resurrection body. Paul says nothing except that there is a seed that is planted and there is a result that springs up with new and eternal incorruptible life. He doesn't say, oh by the way, there's some sort of awareness in the buried state.

It's just not there. So we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, to meet the Lord, not to reunite with the Lord, not to go through some meaningless ritual. There's no need for disembodied souls to jump back into the ground and pop up.

Why would they? It would be silly. Now what is the goal here? Comfort one another with these words. This should be a source of comfort.

It's all in God's hands. God will designate the time. God will designate the manner.

God will decide who's alive and who's already checked out. God will send His Son and He will meet His own in the air. He does not come to earth.

This is not the second coming. It says nothing about His feet touching the Mount of Olives and splitting it and delivering Israel at the end of the tribulation because this is not the second coming. Those who try to conflate the rapture with the second coming just don't read for detail.

This is completely and utterly different than all of the descriptions of the second coming. The Lord comes in the air and the only people who are raised are those who sleep in Jesus. Daniel does not sleep in Jesus.

Moses does not sleep in Jesus. Job and all the rest of the Old Testament saints, none of them are asleep in Jesus. These are His own, those who are Christ's at His coming, at His coming for His own.

God is going to send the Lord Jesus a second time. This is Revelation 19. This is all of those gathered in the valley of Megiddo, Armageddon, and He comes with clouds.

He comes with thousands of white robed saints. Where did they come from? That's us if we're qualified and we're not in the back with a shovel and a broom picking up what the horses left behind. We hope to be on a horse.

We hope to be riding forward with the Lord Jesus and helping Him accomplish His goal that the blood run as high as the horse's bridles. And anybody that's squeamish isn't going to be on a horse and I have no pity on you whatsoever. You just don't understand the Lord's plan.

This needs to happen or God wouldn't do it. So let's get on board and make it happen. And blessed be the Lord that teaches my hands to war and my fingers to fight.

And we ought to be ready to accompany the Lord on a white horse and get this job done. Cleanse the earth, set up the Millennial Kingdom, fulfill God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all of their descendants, all of those who are believers, all of those who are proselytes. It isn't going to happen until God cleanses the earth at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom and He's going to send His Son and His Son's own to do it.

And we want to be in that number. When the saints go marching in, I don't want to be marching in. I want to be marching out.

I want to be on a horse. I want to be with the Lord Jesus. I may be well back but I want to be on a horse somewhere.

I don't want to be on the ground behind them someplace. So, that is the rapture of the church. And this is when what Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 15 is fulfilled.

We are not unclothed. We are not found naked. We are clothed upon.

We are overclothed. We are prepared for that eternal life with God. But you have to think about then what? It's going to be a glorious day.

It's a glorious hour. But the new of that will wear off as all new things do. We will become accustomed to a resurrection body.

We will become accustomed to the future life where Christ is victorious and where Satan has been cast into the bottomless pit and the Millennial Kingdom is underway. Then what? You've got to think past that happy day. People that get married, it's a wonderful wedding day.

But you hear many people say, I heard somebody say last night, you know, I'm not so much

looking forward to the wedding, I'm looking forward to being married. It's the married life. It's the fellowship.

It's the intimacy. It's the two becoming one flesh. It's the prospect and the potential and the growing old together and sharing your life together.

That's what you want in the marriage. It's not all about the wedding. The wedding may be great.

The wedding may be brief. It doesn't really matter. It's the marriage that counts.

And what Paul is encouraging the Corinthians to do is not only think about the possibility and the potential of the resurrection itself and the nature of that resurrection and with what kind of body do they come, but once you've got that body, then what? Then what? We have the opportunity by our choices, by the expression of our faith and our patience and our obedience now to determine that outcome. With what body are we going to come? With what potential glory will we shine? You're determining that this moment, this afternoon, tomorrow, with whatever time is left. And the resurrection is a wonderful event, but it's not all about, well, I sowed the seed and look, a plant came up.

What kind of plant? How fruitful? What purpose is it going to serve? Are you a weed seed? You plant a weed and it comes up a weed? Think ahead. What's the purpose of the crop? Be a part of the purpose. Be prepared.

Be ready. And it is not only a comfort, it is an encouragement to faith. It is an encouragement to patience.

It is an encouragement to be about the Lord's work. Jesus said even as a boy, I must be about my father's affairs. It's about my father.

He said that at the age of 12 when his parents found him at the temple after three days, what did he say? Did you not know? It's about the father. I'm looking at my father. My father's working, I am working.

My father's got a purpose, I've got a purpose. We should be the same way. Well, we'll pick up in chapter 16 of 1 Corinthians and find out about the collection for the saints, but just look at the close of that chapter.

Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Notice, thanks be to God, it is through Christ, but the thanks go to God. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, be immovable, be always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is going to bear that fruit.

It's eternal fruit. It's kingdom fruit. It's kingdom of the Father fruit.

So be steadfast, be immovable, be focused on that resurrected potentiality, that resurrected

service and function. It makes us strong. It puts us on the solid rock.

That's what Jesus did. For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross and despised the shame. This is the joy that is set before us, and we can do the same.

Father, thank you for the truth of your Word. Thank you for the example of the Lord Jesus. Thank you for the earnest of your Spirit.

Thank you for the first fruits of the Lord Jesus demonstrated before our eyes, that transformed life and eternal life is not just an abstraction. It's not just an ephemeral philosophical truth. It is a concrete, visible, tangible reality, and something to which we can look forward with enthusiasm that will motivate us and make us strong in our faith as we seek to live our lives in a way that is pleasing in your sight and glorifying to the Lord Jesus.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.