

God's Plan for the Ages - Part 4

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I. Introduction.

- A. We are expecting total apostasy of the organized church at the end of the age.
- B. This will be under one ecclesiastical head operating under the counterfeit Christ.
- C. This head will sponsor the worship of the political ruler and will require some kind of a mark to participate in the economy.

II. The non-apostate part of the church.

A. Paul believed that Paul was going to come in his lifetime, but for those who had passed away he looked forward to reunion with them because they are freed from death. (1 Thessalonians 4; 1 Corinthians 15)

B. The Rapture.

1. Those who are alive during Christ's return though will not experience any death. There is considerable debate about when this will occur - either the beginning, middle, or end of the last 7 years or seventieth week (Pre-tribulationism, Mid-tribulationism, and Post-tribulationism, respectively).

2. These views take place within the overall tribulation which consists of the Little Tribulation (the first half of the seven years) and the Great Tribulation (the last half of the seven years).

3. Some argue their positions based upon systems of belief and assumptions.

a. Some believe that God will not deal with the Jews until He is down with the church.

b. There is no mention of the church in Revelation from chapter 4 to 19. The assumption is that the church is not on earth.

c. Some see the elders in Revelation as being the church, and therefore assume that the church is in heaven. (Luke 17; Matthew 24)

1) Christ speaks of a taking out of people during the end.

2) It seems that the purpose of the Rapture is to prevent the church from being judged.

d. There is a claim that many will be saved after the Rapture and hence there must be an earlier Rapture.

e. Some Christians assume that the parable of the ten virgins explains an earlier Rapture. (Matthew 24)

4. Most defend their position emotionally, and little Scripture helps to defend any position.

C. The hope of the resurrected body.

1. We will not simply be sitting on a cloud in heaven.

2. The example of a man who apparently died and was restored to life. He experienced a different kind of life beyond the grave. Another man with a similar experience said he could receive the answer to any question he wanted and his emotions towards God were expanded.

3. We are trying to experience the joys of God in a most inefficient body. The new body has a brain that really works.

4. In a test of two people at the point of death, the Christian's brain activity went off the chart and the non-Christian's brain went dead. The charge registered was likely showing the power of transfer to the new body.

5. We will be able to travel anywhere at the speed of thought. Christ delighted in instantaneous rearrangement of molecules. He could have moved the ship in John 6 at the speed of thought as an example showing this (John 8). The glorified body is not subject to material law.

6. We will have a body like Jesus' glorified body. (Philippians 3:21-22; 1 John 3:2-3)

7. It is possible that two worlds can simultaneously exist. We are seated in heavenly places. (Ephesians 2:6)

8. God can modify our frequency so that we can see on in a different realm. He is a God who is near (and this will be made more clearly known). (2 Kings 6; Jeremiah 23:23; Colossians 1:21)

9. The reason that we do not see God now is that He operates on frequency holiness and we operate on frequency sinfulness - it is dangerous for us to connect with God on the same realm, and God in his mercy keeps us out of His frequency until when we get our new body when we will be able to interact on His frequency. (Hebrews 10; 12:29)

III. Conclusion.

A. Caution: do not get more involved in the end times than the Bible does.

B. Five main chapters teach this subject: Daniel 2, 9; Revelation 13; Matthew 24; 2 Thessalonians 2.

C. We need to get aboard what God is doing.

D. The things of God are incomprehensible, but we can explore them. (1 Corinthians 2)

Application questions.

1. In your own words briefly summarize the Rapture touching on the various views.

2. What is the significance of the resurrected body? How does this concept of life after death differ than what is commonly believed in our culture?

3. What excites you most about the resurrected body? Explain your reaction to the speaker's claim that we will be able to operate fully on the same frequency with God.
