

January 15, 2023

Pastor Ken Sistrunk

The Resurrection From the Dead Series #5: The Rapture Problem

I Corinthians 15:50-52 ⁵⁰Now I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— ⁵²in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

I Thessalonians 4:13-18 ¹³Brothers, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you will not grieve like the rest, who are without hope. ¹⁴For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, we also believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him. ¹⁵By the word of the Lord, we declare to you that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will be the first to rise. ¹⁷After that, we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸Therefore encourage one another with these words. (BSB)

I. Here are the details of these passages.

- A. Last week we talked about Paul using **analogies** to illustrate and compare our earthly existence with our permanent eternal existence.
- B. Our earthly bodies must be **replaced** in order to inherit the Kingdom of God. V. 50
- C. Paul reveals a mystery of a **sudden** change in the dead in Christ and with those who are still alive at “the last trumpet”. V. 51-52 This truth has many interpretations and has divided many local churches from each other.
 1. Some believe that these passages, I Thessalonians 4:16 and Revelation 11:15, refer to the **same** event. This means that the rapture occurs right in the **middle** of the 7 year tribulation.
 2. Others believe that the Revelation 11 passage has nothing to do with the “last trumpet” and that the rapture will happen **before** The Great Tribulation.
- D. The dead who died in a **saving** relationship with Jesus Christ will rise first. Then we who are still alive will experience the change that we talked about last week. V. 51-52, I Thessalonians 4:15-17
- E. We are to **encourage** each other with these words! V. 18

II. How can we apply these truths?

- A. The **rapture** is going to happen. However, be aware of anyone who insists that they have it all figured out. These people have destroyed many churches by insisting that their view is the only way to see it. Christ will come like a thief in the night and no one knows exactly when. This doctrine should never be used as a **test** for true faith.

- B. We can be assured of our salvation and of the salvation of anyone who has received Jesus Christ.
- C. This should be an extremely encouraging passage. This should fill us with hope and a confidence that Jesus is coming back and that He will make good on His promises.
- D. We should never look for the rapture but we should be busy doing what Christ has commanded us to do.

Matthew 28:18-20 ¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (BSB)