

Now Concerning Spiritual Things
an historical account of one man's walk with God

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WATERS CHARTED BY FAITH¹
RAPTURE PREPARATION
PART ONE

On the night in which He was betrayed, Jesus spoke to his disciples and said, "However when He, the Spirit of truth has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears, He will speak and He will tell you of things to come."² The *things to come* to which Jesus referred are (1) the things revealed and/or prophesied under the new testament to which He referred at the last supper,³ as revealed in what we now call the New Testament, (2) the relationship of those events and revealed prophesies to the ones recorded in the Old Testament, and (3) things the Spirit reveals to God's servants and prophets today in preparation for His soon coming.⁴ Dwight Pentecost writes, "A greater body of Scripture is given to prophecy than any other one subject, for approximately one-fourth of the Bible was prophetic at the time it was written."⁵ And the Bible is the only book that prophesies God's timetable of future events and the ultimate destinies of man. If an event is prophesied in the Scripture, it will come to pass. For example, there are more than forty

¹Faith comes by hearing God's word -- not just with one's ears which are designed to perceive audible sound waves within specified frequencies, but also with the heart, for it is to the heart that God's Spirit speaks and with which one believes unto righteousness. When one's heart has been prepared, spiritual hunger occurs. Then when he hears the word of God, he believes and the result *creates* righteousness. Hence the Word of God is creative today as it was in His original creation. See Romans 10:17, 2 Corinthians 1:22, Galatians 4:6 & Ephesians 3:16.

²John 16:13.

³In Matthew 26:28, Mark 13:24 and Luke 22:20, Jesus in instituting the Lord's Supper, referred to the shedding of His blood on the cross the following day, as His blood of the new covenant. This is the last blood covenant instituted by God confirmed by the writer of the Hebrew letter as an everlasting covenant. See Hebrews 13:20.

⁴"Surely the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets." (Amos 3:7).

⁵**J. Dwight Pentecost**, *Things To Come*, p. vii, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

prophesies of the Messiah fulfilled in Jesus Christ. However, one of the problems in dealing with prophecy is the interpretation of that which is written.

In general, there are two methods⁶ of interpretation of prophecy: (1) the allegorical method and (2) the literal or grammatical-historical method, and within these two methods are numbers of differing views. Bible students disagree on which method is correct. And Bible students over the centuries since the resurrection of Jesus Christ have changed the focal point of their interest. On occasion, this has prompted the "popular view" to gradually swing from one method to the other. If my observation is correct, the *literal* view today seems to have substantial support among some of the conservative evangelical groups with which I am familiar. I happen to accept the literal method. Not because I examined every facet of both methods in detail and then drew my conclusion accordingly, but because of a project the Lord has given to me concerning the rapture of the Church. Of course, the literal method does not rule out figures of speech, symbols, allegories and types if the nature of the context or sentence so dictates.

It was only after my interest was prompted by God's call more than two years ago to do this (His) project that I began to study end-time events in the scripture beginning with the rapture of the Church. So you could not classify me as a serious student in Bible end-time events. I still have much to learn. Come and learn with me. If you will do so, I can assure you that what we will discover will be interesting, to say the least, and exciting if you are able to accept by faith what I have been asked to do. And what we will discover will very likely be something you have never heard of before as I write in preparation to reveal God's project concerning the rapture of His body, the Church.

The word *rapture*, which is not in the Bible, originated from the Latin Vulgate, a Latin translation of the Greek New Testament. In 1 Thessalonians 4:17, the English translation of the phrase "shall be caught up" was translated from the Greek word "harpazo," which means to "catch away," "seize upon with force" or to "snatch

⁶I will not attempt to define the two methods here since that would prompt additional writing not related to this paper.

up.” The Latin translation of *harpazo* is rapere which is the root of the English term “rapture.” Latin translations were used throughout much of the history of the Western Church. As a result, a number of theological terms developed out of the Latin language. Trinity, millennium and imminence are other theological principles of similar origin that are not in English translations of the Bible, but are clearly taught in the scripture.

To be more specific, my understanding of Bible prophecy puts me in the literal, premillennial, pretribulational camp. And it is from that point of view that I write. As a preface to understanding my writing concerning end-time events beginning with the Rapture, here are six helpful definitions.

Rapture

The point in future time when the Lord [Jesus] Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. These events, which seem to occur very closely in sequence, will both herald *and* trigger the instant resurrection of all the dead in Christ who will then rise and *meet Him in the air*. Then those who at that time are alive in Christ will be *translated* and rise to *meet them in the air*. Thus, *both groups* shall always thereafter “be with the Lord.”⁷

Tribulation

The tribulation in Bible prophecy is the seven-year period of time *between* the rapture of the Church and the second coming of Christ. Extensive biblical comments on the tribulation are found in Revelation, chapters 6-19. Daniel’s “seventy weeks [of years],” (Daniel 7:24-27) are the framework within which the tribulation or the seventieth week occurs. The seven-year period of Daniel’s seventieth week is a time span to which a number of descriptive terms have been applied, for example: tribulation, great tribulation, day of the Lord, day of wrath, day of distress, day of trouble, time of Jacob’s distress, day of darkness and gloom and wrath of the Lamb.

Millennium

A Latin term for a thousand years. Revelation 20:1-7 states that Christ will reign for a thousand years after His return to Jerusalem. The millennium will be a time following the seven-year tribulation when Jesus Christ will be the focus of all creation and when He will reign and rule visibly over all the earth in power and great glory. It will be a wonderful time in which righteousness

will cover the earth as water covers the sea.

Pretribulation

The interpretation of Bible prophecy which holds that the Church, the body of Christ, in its entirety, will by resurrection and translation, be removed (raptured) from the earth before any part of the tribulation begins and will therefore not undergo any of the trials of the seven-year tribulation.

Premillennium

The view of Bible end-time events which holds that Christ will gloriously return to earth, literally, bodily and visibly *before* the millennial age begins, and that by His presence, a kingdom will be instituted over which He will reign as King. In this kingdom will occur the fulfillment of all of Israel’s covenants, the downfall and judgment of all Gentiles (non-Christians) and the inauguration of the kingdom of righteousness on the earth. Translation

There are four types of *translations* recorded in the scriptures. For clarity, here are definitions of each with scripture references:

(1) Colossians 1:13 (KJV)

The occurrence of an act of God wherein one experiences an inward spiritual change [or translation] from the kingdom of the world [Satan’s kingdom of darkness] into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus [spiritual light/sight] in the “born-again experience.”

(2) Hebrews 11:5 (KJV)

The occurrence of an act of God whereby one is changed [translated] from an earthly physical state to a spiritual heavenly state, without the intervening experience of death, and is spiritually transported into heaven not to return to earth. The two cases of this type of *translation* recorded in the bible are, (1) Enoch in Genesis 5:21-24 & Hebrews 11:5 and Elijah in 2 Kings 2:11. It is presumed that the translation experienced by both Enoch and Elijah will be the same as those who will be translated at the rapture of the Church, about which I will be writing. The apostle Paul describes what I believe to be this experience in 1 Corinthians 15:51-53.

(3) Acts 8:39, 40

The occurrence of an act of God whereby one is translated or *transported spiritually* from one place to another on the earth, without being changed from an earthly physical state to a spiritual heavenly state. The deacon evangelist Philip experienced this type of translation

(4) 2 Corinthians 12:2-4

The occurrence of an act of God wherein one is

⁷See 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17.

translated or *transported spiritually* from the earth to heaven and back to earth again without being changed into a spiritual heavenly state. The apostle Paul experienced this type of translation.

Prerapture Translations, Evangelist's Style

I have previously written that in these last days before the rapture of the Church, God will empower His servants supernaturally to counter the stepped up activity of the enemy. As an introduction to such a 20th century occurrence, here is one such incident from the New Testament.

First Century Example

Philip was one of the first seven deacons appointed to relieve the Apostles of seeing to the daily needs of Greek speaking Jewish widows.⁸ While preaching in a city of Samaria, an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip and told him to go to Gaza on the road that goes down from Jerusalem. In route Philip met a eunuch who was the Jewish Treasurer of Ethiopia. He had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning home and while riding in his chariot, was reading from the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. After a brief exchange with the Treasurer, he was converted and baptized by Philip. Then as "they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea."⁹ The phrase "caught Philip away" (caught away Philip in KJV) is translated from the Greek word *harpazo* (Strong's #726), the same Greek word used in translating the phrase "shall be caught up" from 1 Thessalonians 4:17. So here we have Philip, the evangelist, being *translated* (transported spiritually) from Gaza to Azotus, a distance of about twenty-four miles. This method of transportation is the same as that utilized at the Rapture with the difference being Philip was not changed into a heavenly, spiritual entity as will occur at the Rapture.

Twentieth Century Example

Jesse Duplantis is an evangelist who preaches the powerful message of *Jesus now* on television stations in many parts of the world. Chapter five of his book, "HEAVEN, Close Encounters of the God Kind," is entitled "I was Translated by God." The translation was in principle, very much like that of deacon Philip, the

evangelist. God had an urgent need that required the immediate attention of Jesse. Here is the story in brief:

A man in Lafayette, Louisiana, phoned Jesse, who was in Monroe, Louisiana attending a convention as one of the speakers. The man's three year old daughter was ill with a temperature of 103 degrees. Jesse was asked to stop at Lafayette on his way home to pray for the little girl. He left Monroe at 10:35 A.M. to drive back to his home in Houma, Louisiana, via Lafayette. As he was headed south on highway 165, unusual things began to happen. The Spirit of God began to "bubble up" inside of him. Then as the bubble "began to burst," praise erupted from Jesse's lips. As he did this, his car seemed to fill up with smoke or fog he couldn't smell. With the anointing of God heavily upon him, suddenly he was in the spirit and didn't feel or see anything, as he was surrounded by the "fog or smoke." After a brief period of such circumstances, Jesse came to himself on the freeway in Lafayette with both hands raised in praise and worship to God. He quickly put his hands back on the steering wheel. As he looked around, wondering what had happened, he checked his watch to find the time was 11:05 A.M., *only thirty minutes* after he left Monroe. Then he thought there must something wrong with his watch. He didn't remember driving through Alexandria, eighty-two miles from Monroe, much less driving the one hundred and seventy-four miles from Monroe to Lafayette. Jesse's next thought was to call the man whose daughter was ill. He stopped at a convenience store to use the phone, called the man's home and got no answer. He then called the hospital and found that the young child was hospitalized, was decidedly worse, and was in convulsions with a temperature of 107 degrees. Under these conditions death was imminent. With the doctors trying to save the little girl's life, Jesse yelled to the frantic father over the phone, "Lay your hand upon your daughter!" He then yelled over the phone, "You demon devil from hell, I bind you in the power of Jesus' name! You'll not touch this baby anymore because God has spoken it from His throne!"¹⁰ Then suddenly the father began to shout "Praise God! Praise God!" and Jesse heard the doctor say, "Look at this!" The little girl had stopped convulsing and her temperature returned to normal. Tears flowed from the eyes of the mother, the father and Jesse as they praised God for His healing the

⁸See Acts 6:1.

⁹Acts 8:39, 40, Italics added.

¹⁰Jesse Duplantis. HEAVEN, Close encounters of the God Kind, Harrison House, Tulsa, Oklahoma, p. 62. (I recommend this book to those of you who read my letters. J.A.)

child. Two hours later the father checked his young daughter out of the hospital.

Jesse was somewhat perplexed with the thought that God had *translated* him from Monroe to Lafayette, a distance of one hundred and seventy-four miles, to pray for the child over the phone when that could have been done from a phone anywhere. But apparently that was God's way of blessing everyone "in the circle." And His ways are not our ways.

When Jesse got back to his car, he then began to have thoughts on his mode of travel from Monroe to Lafayette, and thought, if I've been translated, I didn't use any gas. He then turned on the ignition and the fuel gage went all the way to full! The trip of one hundred and seventy-four miles had taken 30 minutes counting the time it took Jesse to drive from his friend's office in Monroe to highway 165 south, plus the driving time in Lafayette to get to the convenience store. That doesn't leave much time for the actual translation. Wouldn't it be interesting to know the exact lapsed time between the "take off and landing" or the "departure and arrival" of the evangelist Philip in the first century and evangelist Jesse and his car in the latter part of the 20th century? If it could happen in the first century, it can happen in the 20th and 21st century! God is still God. He is still on the throne – He created us all – and the greatest blessing of life is to be His servant.

The apostle Paul, deacon evangelist Philip and evangelist Jesse were all directly involved in God's method of spiritual translation and remained in their physical, earthly state. The same type of translation will occur at the Rapture except that we will all be changed into a spiritual, heavenly state exactly like Enoch, Elijah and Jesus. And that's exciting!

God's Timetable

The next event of *major importance* on God's timetable is the rapture of the Church. Although there are four concepts of the Rapture,¹¹ my previously stated view is pretribulational as defined above. The basis for the Rapture concept is contained in principle in the apostle Paul's writing to the Churches in Thessalonica and Corinth. Paul and Silas established the Church in Thessalonica. After converting some Jews, a great multitude of Greeks and many of the prominent women,

they departed for Berea.¹² Some time later Timothy brought to Paul news about the Church in Thessalonica. There was good news of their zeal and steadfastness, but there was concern among some that the believers who had died would miss Christ's second coming. Paul explained that this would not be the case, in his first letter to them, with these words about the Rapture, "But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep [have died], lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 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 will by no means precede those who are asleep. For 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. 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. Therefore comfort one another with these words."¹³

A number of things are evident from this passage of scripture. First, Paul received this revelation from the Lord, Himself. Secondly, the new first-century believers were already looking for the Lord's "soon return," and thirdly, the Thessalonians thought that death might cause them to miss this important event. Paul's letter to them affirms that the Rapture will remove from the earth all born-again believers (temples of the Holy Spirit) which will leave the world in [spiritual] darkness. In this event Christ will descend from heaven and meet the Church (His bride) *in the air but He does not descend to the earth*. Scriptures concerning the Rapture are sometimes erroneously confused with those which prophesy the Lord's second coming.¹⁴ To help distinguish between these two events, the Rapture involves *movement from the earth to heaven* while the Second Coming involves *movement from heaven to the earth*.

. . . more next time, the Lord willing.

¹²See Acts Chapter 17.

¹³1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, brackets added.

¹⁴For example, the posttribulational view holds that the Rapture and Second Coming occur at the same time and that the scriptures refer to only one event instead of two.

¹¹The four concepts of the Rapture are (1) posttribulational, (2) midtribulational, (3) the partial-rapture theory and (4) pretribulational.