

# The Rapture of the Saints

by John Hunter

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*The sermon explores the glorious event of the Rapture, highlighting the resurrection of the dead, the transformation of the living, and the eternal companionship with Christ that awaits believers.*

**Duration:** 33:12

**Scripture:** Genesis 1:3, Matthew 24:31, John 5:8, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, Revelation 19:15

**Topics:** "Rapture"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of Lazarus being raised from the dead by Jesus. He emphasizes that resurrection is the work of Christ and that the same power that raised Lazarus can raise millions of people. The preacher also highlights the importance of speaking as a means of releasing divine energy, citing examples from the Bible such as God speaking to create light in Genesis and Jesus speaking to heal a paralyzed man in John. The sermon concludes with the anticipation of Christ's return and the transformation of the dead and living believers through his spoken word.

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## Transcript

1 Thessalonians 4 at verse 16. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. 2 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

3 And so shall we ever be with the Lord, the one that we have been hearing about, whose person has been so magnified before us. 4 He is coming back. Brethren, we're going to see him.

We're going to be like him. We're going to be with him forever. 5 Drawing the meeting to a close, I want to talk to you about the Lord.

I want to draw your attention to certain wonderful things 6 that will be seen or take place at the rapture. Let me enumerate them, please, will you? For in these verses, there are probably about a dozen things. Look now again at verse 16.

The Lord himself, the wonder of his person, 7 shall descend from heaven, the wonder of divine movement, with a shout, the wonder of divine power. 8 The dead in Christ shall rise, the wonder of selective resurrection. 9 Then we which are alive and remain, the wonder of transformation, shall be caught up, the wonder of rapture.

10 Together, the wonder of completion, the first time the church will seem to be complete. 11 Again together, secondary idea, the wonder of reunion. 12 To meet the Lord, the wonder of revelation.

13 In the air, the wonder of assembling. 14 So shall we ever be, the wonder of eternity. 15 With the Lord, the wonder of his companionship.

16 What a day, glorious day this will be! 17 The Lord himself shall come. 18 Listen to him in the upper room. Let not your heart be troubled.

19 Ye believe in God, whom ye have never seen? Believe in me when ye can't see me. 20 In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you.

21 I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go, I will come again. 22 On the precincts of Bethany, with hands outstretched in blessing, slowly he went. 23 The fact of his going is the proof of his coming.

I will come again. 24 The same Jesus. 25 Brethren, he is coming back, and he is coming back personally.

26 No angel will take his place. Gabriel is too insignificant for this. 27 That wondrous moment in the divine calendar.

28 The Lord himself shall descend from heaven, the wonder of movement. 29 That day he shall leave his Father's throne and step into mid-air. 30 The terminus is not Bethlehem this time.

31 The terminus later on will be Jerusalem. 32 But this time he is coming into mid-air, and as he comes, he shouts. Did you get that? 33 The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout.

Now, why does he shout? You know, the Lord does lots of things that we think he doesn't need to do. 34 But why should he shout? Speaking is the method which divine persons have chosen to express their energy. When they want to release their power, when they want to express their energy, they speak.

Now, let me illustrate. A way back yonder in Genesis 1, the Lord said, Let there be light. Now, when he spoke, he released his energy.

What happened? And there was light. Come to John 5. Here's a man lying at the pool. 38 years he's been there.

It's a long time. Will thou be made whole? How can I, Lord? Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And when he spoke, he released his energy.

The man rose, took up his bed, and walked. Go forward. Revelation 19.

The Lord is coming to establish his kingdom, coming to vanquish every foe. How will he do it? Come on, brethren. He'll do it by speaking, says the inspired writer.

Out of his mouth went a sharp sword with which he will vanquish his enemies. The sword is for judgment. The mouth is for speaking.

When he comes in that day, he'll never strike a blow. By the word of his mouth, he'll defeat every foe. But before that, he's coming for us.

What a tremendous work awaits Christ. Yonder, for centuries, the dead in Christ have lain. On that day when he comes, millions of Christians will be alive.

It will be his work to raise and change the dead. His work that day to transform the living. How will he do it? He'll do it by speaking.

The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout. Come with me to Bethany for a moment, please. Because the dead in Christ must rise.

Watch now. Roll away the stone. So roll it away, Allison.

Lazarus, hither, come! And the voice of Christ penetrated the spirit world and brought Lazarus back into his body. Now you say, I know what happened now. No, you don't.

He walked out. No, he didn't. He was bound hand and foot with grave clothes.

Resurrection is peculiarly the work of Christ. Now, but just a minute. Just a minute.

The power that can raise one man can raise a million men if the same power will operate. If the same voice shall speak, come again. Lazarus is four days dead.

The process of corruption has already taken place. That's what concerned Martha. Behold, he stinketh.

Now watch. The power that can raise a man four days dead can raise a man 4,000 years dead if necessary. All that is required is that the same person come, that the same person speak, that the same person releases energy.

Oh, the wonder. The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout. And the dead in Christ shall rise first.

What a moment when it takes place. Listen to what it says. So also is the resurrection of the dead.

It is sown in corruption. It is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor.

It is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness. It is raised in power.

It is sown a natural body. It is raised a spiritual body. Listen again.

It is sown in corruption. Ah, yes, that body will corrupt. It will disintegrate.

It will decay. On that resurrection morning handled by the power of Christ, it will be raised in incorruption. Never will it decay, decompose anymore.

Listen. Raised in incorruption means this. That it will maintain for all eternity its original perfection.

Corruption is a moving away from an original condition. Now, right. So that when it's raised in incorruption, it means it will maintain its primitive splendor and perfection to all eternity.

Sown in dishonor, raised in glory. Philippians 3, this vile body, this body of humiliation fashioned like unto his body of glory. You see, this body goes down dishonored, shamed by the presence and practice of sin.

How often, how often the blood is mounted to our cheek as we've thought of what we've said and done. It is sown in dishonor, shame, raised in glory. So that the dishonor that marked this body will be absent from that body.

All the passions that cry for satisfaction will never be known again. That body will be raised like unto Christ's body of glory. There it is beautiful, resplendent, attractive.

There in all its symmetry and all its perfection, raised in glory, a body like unto his own body. Sown in weakness, raised in power. Do you read it like that? Maybe you read it like this.

Sown in weakness, raised by power. Doesn't say that. It says that body is sown in weakness.

You know, after all, it's only a fragile tenement of clay. How easily the strongest of us are cut down. It needs clothing to save it from the elements, to shelter it.

Hang the notice over, please, will you? Fragile, handled with care. But on that resurrection morning, Christ will raise it and he'll raise it in power, not by power, in power. That is, as weakness marked this body, power will mark that body.

It will be a body instinct with energy, a body marked by inherent power through God's vast and wonderful creation will move swift as the lightning's flash to serve God and Christ eternally. Marked by inherent power. Never again shall we know sickness.

Never again shall we know breakdown. Never again shall we know exhaustion. There in that body, a body marked by inherent power, we shall serve God and Christ forever and ever.

It is sown a natural body. It is raised a spiritual body. That word natural, it is sown a soulish body.

It is raised a spiritual body. What does it mean? It is sown a natural or soulish body. It means it's a body governed by the soul.

Isn't that right? See, albeit you've got the spirit of God, there's been many a day when there was tension. Isn't that right? And soul and spirit were in conflict. The soul won the day.

But it's a, it's a, this body governed by the soul is a perfect body as far as the functioning of the senses are concerned. In that day it will be raised a spiritual body. A body governed by the spirit.

But just a minute. How can you have a body and it be spiritual? What does it mean when it says it's raised a spiritual body? Well, now I'll tell you what it does mean. And then I'll tell you what it does mean.

When it says it is raised a spiritual body, it does not mean a body composed of spirit. What it does mean is it's a body that will express spirit. And if you want to know something of that spiritual body, you read the resurrection chapters.

For the body in which Christ was here for 40 days is the body in which he went to heaven. There you'll find it's a body that's not governed by the laws that govern this body. There you'll find that it's a tangible body.

A spirit hath not flesh and bone as you see me have. It's nothing ethereal, nothing ghost-like, handle me and see. It's a body that could appear and disappear as he prepared them for the permanence of his going.

It's raised a spiritual body. We which are alive and remain, so there are thousands of living believers to be changed. Listen to the inspired writer.

Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump. Behold, I show you a mystery.

Two questions, please. One, what is a mystery? Two, what is this mystery? Now, in dealing with this word mystery, it will give me the opportunity to draw your attention to the fact that it is folly to try and interpret your New Testament with an English dictionary, for it was written in Greek. Got that? What is a mystery? Well, now in English, the word mystery means something that's mysterious, something that's hidden.

In your New Testament, a mystery is something that is revealed at the time that God chose to reveal it. That which was kept secret from the world since the world began, but now is made manifest. A mystery is something that is revealed at the time that God chooses to reveal it.

Now, what is this mystery? Well, now they say, well, now this is the mystery of the rapture, but just a minute, you never leave the earth in 1 Corinthians 15. Is that right? Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

You never leave the ground, the earth in 1 Corinthians 15. You see, when you read that, you read it in the context of 1 Thessalonians 4, and you're perfectly right to do that, but you must put them both together. The change here is the mystery of the change that will take place at the rapture.

We shall not all die, sleep, but we shall all be changed. That's the death blow to partial rapture. Come again.

We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. The change will take place in a moment in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump. Let me deal with that.

In a moment. Now, a moment is the smallest possible divisible point of time. Got that? A moment is the smallest possible divisible point of time.

Let me illustrate. A year, a month, a week, a day, an hour, a minute, a second, a moment. As quick as that.

Got that? In the twinkling of an eye. Sometimes they say, well, now, it's just like when your lid drops. Well, that's quick enough.

The twinkling of an eye at the last trump. What would that mean? Well, the scholars we've been hearing so much about tell us that it's an allusion to the Roman army, well known in the Greek world. The first trumpet, you strike calm.

The second trumpet, you're marshaled. The last trump and you're off. Well, that's possibly right.

Don't believe anyone that tells you, please, it's the last in a series, for there weren't any before it. Very simply, I believe it's the last sound that we'll hear on earth. Now, you might say to me, but just a minute, you're not trying to tell us it's a literal trumpet.

Now, that's very good that you arrived at that conclusion, but that's just what I'm saying. Well, now you say to me, just a minute, I have heard those dealing with first Corinthians, first Thessalonians 4 and first Corinthians 15, and they've spiritualized the trumpet. Well, now I'm not here to criticize my brethren, far be that.

I'm only here to tell you what the passage means. What does it say? At the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound. So it's going to sound.

Not such a quiet affair as we've been led to believe, but possibly it's like John 12 and Acts 9. In John 12, the father spoke to the son, the folks around thought it thundered, but he heard clearly and distinctly. So it says, the last trump, the trumpet shall sound, the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed. Back to first Thessalonians 4 now, please, will you? Then we which arrive and remain shall be caught up.

Well, think of it for a moment. Christ has descended. Can you see him yonder centered in the aerial and astronomical heavens yonder far above earth for everyone? Yes.

And as soon as he shouts, he raises the dead changed. He changes the living and immediately, like steel to a magnet, we make for Christ by an outside power. We are translated.

It's not ascension. Christ ascended in his own power. This is an external power.

We are caught up, snatched away, quickly, unexpectedly glorified. Gloriously. We shall be caught up together for the first time.

The whole church shall be together. Oh, what that will mean to Christ. The whole church gathered together in a very secondary way.

It indicates that we're going to be together. I know that there are some who teach that when the dead are raised first, we'll all and we are changed. We'll all there'll be reunion on earth before we go there.

That's what I call reading between the lines. But nevertheless, nevertheless, we're all going to be together. And who could who could pass an occasion like this without speaking of the wonder of reunion? To meet the Lord.

Caught up together to meet the Lord. The revelation of his person. You know, brothers and sisters, I wasn't reared in a Christian home.

I have a deep longing to meet the man who not only change my destiny, but transform my life. I have no idea what he looks like. Don't pay too much attention to the artist's impression.

Isn't it amazing that you read your New Testament and you have no idea what Christ looked like physically? Oh, we've heard talk today about moral glory. We've heard phrase after phrase announcing his preeminence and perfection and supremacy and sovereignty. We've listened to the Baptist witness to the Christ.

Brethren, I believe that he's far more wonderful, far more beautiful than ever. My tiny mind is conceived. I believe that Christ is wonderful.

He's perfect. He's beautiful. He transcends any thought of perfection and manhood that we have ever known.

We're going to meet the Lord. He'll stand out yonder amongst the crowds in the heavens, central to his gathered bride, Christ, to meet the Lord in the air. Why in the air? Two reasons.

Number one, it's been there that Satan has operated as the prince and power of the air. Think of it. Think of the impotence of Satan.

That all these ransomed beings will make for Christ through his domain, and he can't stop it. Absolutely helpless and impotent as the redeemed throng make for Christ. Oh, what a gathering that will be.

And Satan and his host will just need to stand and watch. Watch now. But in the air, in the air, because that's the only place that could hold us.

Ten thousand times, ten thousand and thousands of thousands shall gather together, marshalled in the air. And everywhere you look, you'll see thousands upon thousands of redeemed humanity gathered around Christ. Oh, can you hear Christ saying, behold, I and the children which God has given me, so shall we ever be.

Eternity is dawned. Dawned in its fullness, in its richness, in its completeness. Eternity will have substance to our experience in that day.

This is just the beginning of the ages of ages. So shall we ever be with the Lord. I want to talk to you about heaven.

Now, this is not easy. Listen to me for a moment. Can you see that first scene in heaven when we're all there and suddenly Christ manifests his glory, displays his splendor, uncovers his excellence, manifests his majesty.

And that manifestation of Christ will prepare us for the next. And in the next situation in heaven, he'll display glory, manifest power, uncover excellence, and that will prepare us for the next. For just as he never manifested himself in the same way down here, so up there, every manifestation of Christ will be different.

And that will go on and on into the depths of eternity. Think of it. Constantly Christ manifesting himself, moving the whole of heaven at the time.

Every eye upon him, drinking in something of the glory of his person, of the wonder and excellence of himself. And brethren and sisters, we'll never reach the end of Christ. There'll never come a time when we'll say we know it all.

We've seen it all. For there are depths in Christ that we'll never fathom. There's a fullness and perfection in Christ, and we'll never reach the end of him.

And up yonder in the glory, as he uncovers excellence, as he manifests splendor, as he displays glory, maybe, maybe just for a moment, our eyes shall go back to Vancouver and Liverpool and we'll look at Christ and we'll wonder, brethren, why it was we never learned to trust him more. When we can see in eternity the glory and wonder of Christ, as he fills all heaven and all eternity. Oh, brethren, what a wonderful person.

What a day, glorious day that will be. Tell me, tell me. Have you ever tried to visualize it? Have you ever tried to think of stepping onto a shore and finding it to be heaven? Ever thought of breathing in air and finding it to be celestial? Ever thought of feeling the throbbings of life and finding it to be the life that is eternal? Ever thought of grasping a hand and finding it to be the hand of Christ? Ever thought of looking into a face to find it to be the face of Christ? Oh, what a day, glorious day that will be.

When we look upon his face, him who saved us by his grace. When he takes us by the hand, leads us through the promised land. What a day, glorious day that will be.

I tell you, earth has nothing on this. It's bonnie spots. Do you understand the word bonnie? It's a good old Scots word.

Yes, all earth's beautiful beauty shall be gone completely by reason of a glory that excels us and central to all heaven, central to the Father's house, central to the administration that is eternal. There Christ shall be, filling it all and each one of us taking in something of his wonder and perfection and glory. Oh, I want to make Christ big.

I want you to recognize how great he is. For this one that fills eternity can fill our hearts and our lives. Say, say, up yonder when we look at Christ, oh, you've heard this before, as we look at Christ, we'll begin to realize that what we sang down here was only too true.

Brethren, tell me, deep down, now be honest, deep down, do you not feel a lack? Do you not feel at times you're not responding as you should? Do you ever feel that despite all your activity, it's not being done the way it should be done? By and by, when I look on his face, beautiful face, thorn-shadowed face, by and by, when I look on his face, I'll wish I had given him more, more, so much more, more of my life than I've ever given before. By and by, when I look on his face, I'll wish I had given him more. Oh, Christ, oh, Christ, we love thee.

Oh, Lord, we've never been what we ought to be. But oh, in our heart of hearts, we love thee. We want to be bigger and better.

By and by, when we kneel at thy feet, beautiful feet, nail-pierced feet, by and by, when we kneel at thy feet, we'll wish we had given thee more, more, so much more, more of my life than I've ever given before. By and by, when I kneel at his feet, I'll wish I had given him.

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