

# Eternity to Eternity 10 Genesis 1:1

by Joseph Balsan

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*Joseph Balsan's sermon explores the creation narrative in Genesis and its implications for the church and the end times.*

**Duration:** 56:29

**Scripture:** Genesis 1:19, 1 Corinthians 15:20, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-15

**Topics:** "Creation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the fourth day of creation, where God created the heavenly light that shines upon the earth. The moon is used as a symbol of the church in the present time, reflecting the light that the Lord has given it. The sermon then shifts to discussing the rapture, emphasizing that believers will be caught up to be with the Lord in their entirety - spirit, soul, and body. The preacher also mentions the significance of the color blue, representing those who are truly born again, contrasting them with the foolish virgins and those who rejected the gospel invitation.

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## Transcript

It would be good to read the portion from the beginning tonight, Genesis 1, verse 1. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, and the earth was without form, and void. And darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light, and there was light, and God saw the light, that it was good.

And God divided the light from the darkness, and God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament, and it was so. And God called the firmament heaven, and the evening and the morning were the second day. And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear, and it was so.

And God called the dry land earth, and the gathering together of the waters called he seas, and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth, and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, an herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit whose seed was in itself after his

kind, and God saw that it was good.

And the evening and the morning were the third day. And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years. And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and it was so.

And God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness, and God saw that it was good.

And the evening and the morning were the fourth day. May the Lord bless to us the reading of his word. We will look at other portions of scripture as we go along, but we have been occupied especially with the fourth day in which God has a heavenly light shining upon the earth.

And we saw last night that the moon which pictures for us having no light of its own, but it reflects the light of the sun, we saw that that pictures for us the church in this present period of time which reflects the light that the Lord has given to it to shine upon the earth. There is no light for the world except the light that is given by means of the holy scriptures and by means of the testimony which the church gets from the scriptures. And last night we saw that just as the moon fluctuates in the heavens above, so the church's testimony through the years has fluctuated.

And we have seen how that the seven stages of the church's history from beginning to end are brought before us in Revelation chapters two and three. Seven is a very prominent number in the book of Revelation. Seven and twelve are two prominent numbers in the book of Revelation.

Seven is the number of completeness. And, of course, we have the seven spirits of God, we have the seven sealed book, we have the seven trumpets, we have the seven vials. Seven is a number which suggests completeness, so that in the seven lampstands we have the entire complete history of the church from its very beginning until its very end.

And then, of course, I might say that twelve is the number of governance, and we find that twelve is the number that is especially suited to the city. We have read of the twelve gates, the twelve foundations, the distance of the height of the wall is 144 cubits, which is the combination of twelve times twelve. Picturing for us the administration of God's government in that future age from the church through which the Lord Jesus Christ is going to administer the universe.

You notice on this chart that on this chart we have something taking place after this age. I remember when I was unsaved and knew nothing about the Bible, I thought that the coming of the Lord was the end of the world, that the coming of the Lord terminated everything. But, as you notice, the coming of the Lord is not the end of the world, but there are events that are going to transpire after the coming of the Lord.

And so, the question is, if the Lord brought in this church for this present age, how is the church age going to end? Now, there is something that I would like to bring before you. Turn to Ephesians chapter 3 for a moment. Ephesians chapter 3 and verse 1. Ephesians 3 and verse 1. For this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you, how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote afore in few words, whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages

was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.

Now, you notice that in this portion that we have read, Paul speaks of a mystery which was made known to him, which was not known in other ages, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. Now, if we come to the word of God, we will find that the word of God speaks frequently of different kinds of mysteries. What is the mystery? Well, we know what the word means by a mystery.

I remember when I was unsaved, I used to read mystery stories. I used to devour them, and, of course, it was always a difficult thing to restrain yourself from going to the end of the book and seeing how the mystery would end. The mystery usually involved a murderer or something of some kind, and you were always anxious to find out who the guilty party was.

Well, that is the world's definition of a mystery, but that is not the scriptural definition of a mystery. A scriptural mystery is something that was kept secret, and is made known by God to those to whom he wants to make them known. Now, here we have a mystery, or a secret, that God concealed from all the ages prior to the days of the apostle Paul, which was not made known in the old ages.

Therefore, it is something that you and I do not find in the Old Testament. And what is that mystery? That mystery is that Jew and Gentile are to be made members of the same body, with both of them on an equal standing. Fellow heirs, as it tells us here, that the Gentile should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.

Now, we want to make note of this, that the mystery is not that Gentiles would be saved. We saw, when we were speaking of the third age, how that God was dealing especially with the Jewish people. All the promises were given to the Jewish people.

But in the Old Testament, through his prophets, God did promise that Gentiles would be saved. But they would be saved conditional upon Israel's blessing. In the coming Kingdom of our Lord Jesus, you notice when Israel is restored, and Israel is again one nation in the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus, you notice the green line, which pictures for us the nations, that the nations will be converted, and nations will be blessed.

Nations will be saved. But you notice that the green line is under the red line, which means to say that Israel will be above the Gentiles. That the Gentiles, though saved, they will be brought into salvation in conjunction with and under the Jewish people.

During the tribulation period, the 144,000 Jews who are sealed by the Holy Spirit of God will be preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, and they will go into the Gentile nations of the earth, to places where they have never heard the name of the Lord Jesus, and they will preach as the disciples preached during the earthly ministry of our Lord. Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Those who receive them, and receive their witness, when the Lord Jesus Christ comes in glory, they will be amongst those nations who are reckoned the sheep.

They will be put on the right hand. Those who have rejected the message of the 144,000, they will be the goats who will be put on the left hand. Those on the right hand will go into the Kingdom, prepared for them from the foundation of the world, so that Gentiles being saved was no mystery.

The prophet Isaiah, the prophet Jeremiah, the prophet Daniel, and others foretold that the Gentiles would be left, and the Gentiles would be saved, but that the Gentiles should be on an equal standing with the Jews, that they should be made members of a new thing, of a body which is the church. That is something that was not known in the Old Testament. It is something that you and I will not find in the Old Testament.

It is a mystery that was made known through the apostle, and it is a mystery that God makes known to you and me in this present age. Now, why do I mention that it is a mystery? Because, if the church is a mystery, if its beginning and its constitution is a mystery, how the church will end its history on earth must also be a mystery. Now, when we turn to the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians, notice what we have in the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians.

How is the church age going to end? Is it going to continue on indefinitely? Is it going to convert the entire world? What is going to be the end of the church age? Notice 1 Corinthians chapter 15, and notice how we have God before us in the 50th verse. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither does corruption inherit incorruption. 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, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Now, notice what Paul says here, Behold, I show you a mystery. How the church's history is going to end upon the earth is also a mystery. It is something that is not made known in the Old Testament, but it is something that is made known to us by means of the apostle.

He says we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. In other words, the church's history is going to end in a moment of time, and this word moment here, and if you have concordances, Greek concordances like youngs or strongs, it would be a very interesting study to just look up the word moment in the various places in which it occurs. It does not mean the same thing in each of the instances, but here in this particular place, the moment here is an atom of time, an instant of time, a measure of time that is so small, and that is so insignificant, and that it cannot be described.

It cannot be put into words. It is going to happen so fast. The church's history on the earth may happen within the next moment.

Before I could even get a single word out of my mouth, the history of the church might end upon earth, because, as far as we know, there are no signs that have to be fulfilled. We know that we are in the very last stage of the church's history on the earth. We know that we are in the stage of Laodicea, so that the next event that is going to happen is the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in a moment of time to take out of this world those who belong to him.

Now, what is it that is going to happen? Let us turn to 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, and here we have a very interesting and enlightening portion as to what is going to happen. Notice here we have brought before us in the 13th verse of the fourth chapter of 1 Thessalonians, Paul says, But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain shall be unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Wherefore, comfort one another with these words. Now, what is it that is going to happen in a moment of time? What is going to happen so swiftly that the human eye will not be able to follow it? And I think that this is a wonderful thought for the Christian who is passing through trial or difficulty. Why, just think, within the next moment we might be in the presence of the Lord Jesus.

Why then worry about what's going to take place tomorrow? Or why then worry about what must take place next week? Before that time comes may come the moment when our Lord Jesus Christ will catch us to be up with him. Now, that doesn't mean, of course, that you and I should be careless. That doesn't mean, well, I know that my taxes are due in a few months.

Well, I've got the money now, but I'm just going to go ahead and spend it because the Lord may come. We'll run into difficulty, we'll run into trouble. But the thing is that we shouldn't be overburdened with these things.

If we don't have the money for our taxes, well, just look to the Lord and just depend upon the Lord the next moment he may come. Or if he doesn't, and you're looking to him, he'll surely supply the means to pay those taxes or whatever it may be. But nevertheless, the thought is that in a moment our Lord Jesus Christ may come.

Now, you know there's the other side to it, too. If, for the believer, the next moment might be the glory, if there's anyone in this meeting tonight and you're not saved, there's only a moment that stands between you and the lost eternity. That means to say, within the next moment, your day of opportunity may be gone forever, because once the Lord Jesus Christ has come and taken his people to be with himself, all those who are unsaved, have heard the gospel, will be left behind, and they'll be left behind for the great tribulation period and for the judgment and the everlasting light of fire.

Make no mistake about it, the Bible gives absolutely no hope to a person that's left behind when the Lord comes. When we speak of the Gentiles who are going to be saved during the tribulation period and are going to go into the kingdom, these are not Gentiles who have heard the gospel. They are people who have never heard the message of salvation.

You say, well, is it possible that there's no one in this country or no one in the world that's never heard the gospel? My, we have it dimmed into our ears constantly. We turn on the radio, and we can almost get a gospel message at any time of the day. We have gospel literature handed to us in tremendous volumes.

We have people interested in us about our souls and speaking to us. Perhaps we're almost like the person who was walking along the street, and somebody offered him a gospel track, and he said, isn't there any place where I can get away from this stuff? And the man says, yes, there is one place where you'll never be bothered with it. You'll never be bothered with it in hell.

No one will ever bother you about being saved in hell. It will be everlastingly too late. Once the Lord Jesus Christ has come, no one will ever bother you about being saved again.

But though there is so much preaching of the gospel, though the gospel is going forth in so many different ways in so many different places, nevertheless, there are vast areas in this world, nations of people in this world, who have never heard the name of the Lord Jesus, who have never heard God's way of salvation, and it is these people who are going to be evangelized by the 144,000 of Israel during the tribulation period. The word of God leaves no doubt that all those who have heard the gospel are left behind and left outside. The five foolish virgins, when the door was shut, wanted to get in, but the door was never opened.

They heard the Lord say, depart from me, I never knew you. Those who rejected the gospel feast invitation, who made excuse and would not come, you remember the 14th chapter of Luke? It says that afterward they came, and they wanted to come into the feast, but the servant says, the house is full, there's no more room. It's not only that we have plain teaching from 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 that those who obeyed not the gospel will believe the devil's lies during the tribulation period, but in the parable teachings of our Lord, we have brought before us very plainly that those who have refused the message will never have an opportunity once the Lord has come to enter in.

Now, notice what the apostle Paul says here in the 15th verse, or the 13th verse. He says, I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent or precede them which are asleep. Now, I want you to notice the authority for which Paul brings this out. He brings it out on the authority of the word of the Lord.

I know that this sounds almost like science fiction. It does. To think that there are a multitude of people on the face of the earth who are suddenly going to disappear.

Disappear so swiftly and so suddenly that man will be unable to find them, that man will be unable to explain the disappearance of so many people from so many different walks of life where the gospel has been going forth. Why, it seems unreasonable to think that a multitude of people could suddenly disappear. If the Lord came in the next moment of time, every believing soul in this audience would be gone in the flash of a second.

Those who are unsaved would be left behind. So that what you and I are following is not cunningly devised fables, but we're following the word of the Lord. Paul says we say this unto you by the word of the Lord.

Now, what do you say? He says, first of all, the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. Now, the first thing we have brought before us is the return of the Lord Jesus. The Lord himself shall descend from heaven.

You notice on the chart here that there is a star. I'm hoping someday to have a sun painted here, because these are the two aspects of the second coming of the Lord Jesus. There are two aspects to the second coming of the Lord Jesus, just as there were two aspects to the first coming of the Lord Jesus.

What do we mean by that? You remember that when he came the first time, he came born a babe in Bethlehem. When he came then, it was only those who were believers who knew him. Remember, it was to the wise men that the star appeared.

They came from the far country to worship the babe. It was to the shepherds, it was to Simeon, it was to Anna, as the babe in Bethlehem, that they saw the child, and they worshiped him, and they went forth with the testimony. And then what happened? He was taken into Egypt, and then he was brought back to Nazareth.

He grew up in Nazareth, and at the age of 30 he came forth publicly. He came forth publicly. Thank you, brother, I appreciate that.

And in the waters of baptism, he was presented to the nation of Israel. There were two aspects. There was his birth, and he was made known to his own.

And then there was his public appearance, when he was baptized publicly. So also concerning the second coming, there is the first part of the second coming, which is as the morning star, and there is the second part of his second coming, which is as the son of righteousness. This is a thing that is made known to us in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament.

This is his coming to the earth. This is his coming for the deliverance of the nation of Israel. This is his coming in judgment.

But this is his coming not to the earth. It is the bright and morning star aspect of his coming. And this is his coming for the church, just as the morning star precedes the sun every day.

Not everybody, of course, sees the morning star. Thank you, brother. Not everybody sees the morning star, only those who get up early enough to see it.

And so, not everybody is going to meet the Lord Jesus in this way when he comes as the morning star. It is only those who are prepared, only those who are born again. And so we have, the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, with the trump of God.

And so there we have the return of the Lord himself. Now this is not death, this is the return of the Lord himself. The very same Jesus who ascended to heaven, that very same Jesus is coming again.

And I want you to notice that when he does come, the first thing that is going to happen is, the dead in Christ shall rise first. Now that is all the dead in Christ, from the very first one that died. Abel was the first one that died.

Abel is in Christ, the dead in Christ. From the time of Abel, all through the church age, everyone who has died believing in Christ, and only they, they are going to be raised. That is the first thing.

The dead in Christ shall rise first. The Bible does not teach any such thing as the general resurrection. You notice on this chart that we have three phases of resurrection.

Or I might say, we have three phases of the first resurrection, here. Now these three parts, they all constitute part of the first resurrection. Christ is the first fruit.

When the Lord Jesus Christ went down into death, the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Why, there we have the first part of the resurrection. Here we have the second phase of the first resurrection, when our Lord Jesus, by his coming, empties the graves of all those who are saved.

From the time of Abel until the time that the last one in the church is saved. And then we also have a third phase of it, and that is the martyr's resurrection. Those Jews who are in the tribulation period are slain for their testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ.

They, whose spirits are in heaven, they also will be raised when our Lord Jesus Christ comes back with his saints. You'll find that in Revelation chapter 20. I think a very beautiful picture of that is in the history of Israel.

I think it's in the 23rd chapter of Leviticus, where you have brought before you the harvest. Israel's harvest was in a threefold sense. When the crop was about ready to be harvested, they would take, first of all, the first fruits.

And that was brought, a single sheep was brought into the tabernacle. This was the forerunner of the harvest that was to follow. And that sheep, of course, pictures for us the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the first fruits.

Then, when the harvest was ripe and ready to be reaped, it was reaped. That pictures for us the resurrection of the saints at the coming of our Lord Jesus. But then there were always gleanings that were left after the harvest.

And that pictures for us the resurrection of the martyrs who, during the tribulation period, are slain for their testimony. They will be raised. You will find these spoken of under the fifth seal in Revelation chapter 6. They will be raised, and all of this constitutes the first resurrection.

Blessed and holy is he which hath part in the first resurrection. And so, the second thing that happens is, first of all, the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the air. Secondly, the resurrection of the saints.

The resurrection of the saved. Not of all the dead, but only of those who are saved. The unsaved dead are left in their graves to await the final resurrection at the end of time, when you notice not only their bodies are raised from the grave, but their souls as well are taken from hell, and they stand before God to be judged and finally consigned to the lake of fire forever.

Now, some person might ask, well, why would there have to be a resurrection? After all, why, if people are spiritually saved, and they're with the Lord in heaven, the moment they die, why then would the Lord be interested in raising their bodies? Because when God made us in the beginning, he made us spirit, soul, and body. I remember a sister up in northern Michigan. She never wanted to think of dying, or of being separated from her body.

She liked to think that when she died, why her soul would sleep in the body. Now, when I asked her why she liked to think that, she says, well, I don't know, but I would think that if I was without my body, it was as though I was undressed, and I don't like to think of being undressed. Well, that's not what the word of God tells us.

The word of God tells us that Paul was caught up into the third heaven, and he says, whether in the body, I cannot tell, or out of the body, I cannot tell. God knows. If he was in the body, it didn't hinder him.

If he was out of the body, he didn't miss it. He didn't feel as though he was undressed. He didn't feel as though he was lacking something.

But, the body is part and parcel of the man. The body is part and parcel of the woman, the person. The body, death comes in because of sin.

The wages of sin is death, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. And so, death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. And so, the Lord is not going to leave the body under the power of death.

He is not satisfied with an incomplete victory. The Lord must have the believer in his entirety, spirit, soul, and body, caught up to be with the Lord. And then you notice the third thing about it is the seventeenth verse.

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so shall we ever be with the Lord. Then we which are alive and remain.

Now watch and notice, there is only one color taken up, and that is the blue. You notice we have two colors here. We have the brown, and we have the blue in the closing days of the church's history.

The blue, of course, speaking of those who are really and truly born again. The brown speaking of those who are mere professors. You know, friends, we may pass amongst Christians as those who are saved, and yet if the Lord should come, it is only those who are born again.

Only those who have the Spirit of God within them that are going to be caught up. The unsaved will be left behind. They may look like Christians, they may act like Christians, they might even think that they are Christians.

But if they've never really and truly been born again, and do not have the Spirit of God within them, what is a Christian? A Christian is a person who has been born again, and has the Spirit of God dwelling within him. I remember reading a story about a lad who was sitting in a religious service with his mother, and the preacher was preaching on the sermon, What is a Christian? What is a Christian? And, of course, he was preaching very zealously, and every once in a while he would pound his head on the desk, and he'd ask, What is a Christian? And then he'd talk for a while, and then he'd come back and, What is a Christian? And, you know, the little boy sitting beside his mother, he asked his mother, Mom, do you know what a Christian is? She says, Yes. He says, Yes.

Yes. And so the preacher continued preaching, and then all of a sudden, with a tremendous bang, he came down with his fist, and he says, Why ask what is a Christian? And the boy yelled out, Mom, you tell him what a Christian is! You tell him! Well, what is a Christian? A Christian is a person who's been born again. A Christian is a person who has the Holy Spirit dwelling within him.

And this is why, when the Lord comes, it's only those who have the Holy Spirit. Here's the mother. She's busily engaged with her children, and there's, just like there always is with youngsters, quite a bit of noise.

How is she going to hear the voice? How is she going to respond to the voice? Here's a man in a busy factory, the engines clanging around, and machinery so loud that he can't even hear himself talk, or can't hear the fellow next to him talk. How is he going to hear when the Lord comes? You know, it's not going to be dependent upon our ears. It may be we're asleep.

And yet, when the Lord comes, why, there's going to be that shout. There's going to be the voice of the archangel, the trump of God, the dead in Christ shall rise first. How are we going to hear his voice? It's

because the Holy Spirit within us is going to hear.

It is the Holy Spirit within us who is going to respond. Romans chapter 8 tells us, he will quicken our mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in us. And you know, the thought of the dead in Christ rising, the thought of we ourselves being changed in a moment.

You know, we're going to have to be changed to pass into the heavens. You know, those men in Germany 6 and Germany 7, my, they had a lot of equipment before they could ever get up that high. Why, they couldn't go up into the atmosphere without a lot of equipment.

Well, you know, the Lord's going to have to equip us in a very swift manner, very quickly. These bodies of ours are going to be changed. And you know, we have pictures of that resurrection body in our Lord Jesus Christ.

You remember that our Lord Jesus Christ, in his resurrection body, could pass right through closed doors. In other words, it was a body that was not affected by matter. It was not a body that was in any way hindered by matter.

Why, just think, according to the word of God, we know that our Lord ascended in his body into the very presence of the Father in a moment of time. When you and I see a star fall from heaven, scientists are able to tell us how long ago it was that that star really fell. You and I are just seeing the end of its life, and yet perhaps the star that fell a billion years ago.

There are stars that today scientists tell us are a billion light years away. Just think of the tremendous distances that there are in space, and yet our Lord, in a moment, ascended from this earth into the very presence of the Father. How could he do it? He had a body that was not limited by space.

Space was no difficulty. Wouldn't it be wonderful to be in a body when all you think to yourself, well, I'd like to be in Paris, and you're there. Or, I'd like to be on Mars, and you're there.

I'd like to be on such and such a planet, or on such and such a constellation, and you're there. Just by thinking so swiftly. The body not limited by space.

A body that you might say is ageless. People sometimes ask the question, when people are raised, are they going to be raised as they passed away? The baby that died, is it going to be a baby in heaven? Sometimes people say, oh, I'm going to see my baby in heaven. Yes, you will see your baby in heaven, but you won't see that baby as a baby.

Immaturity, babyhood, is part and parcel of this life. There's no immaturity in eternity. Just as the harvest is always the reaping of the crop when it's in its maturity, so it is, the resurrection, we're going to be in full maturity.

We're going to be in the image of our Lord Jesus Christ. Isn't it wonderful that you really will be in your thirties forever and ever without end? Isn't it wonderful that we're going to be in that full prime of eternal manhood or womanhood forever and ever in a body that's not going to be limited by time, that's going to be ageless. A body that's not going to be limited by space, a body that's not going to be hindered by matter, a body in which you and I are going to be conformed to the image of God's Son forever and ever.

Now, that doesn't mean that if you and I are going to be in the image of God's Son, we're all going to look just like him. It doesn't mean that our physical appearance is going to be just like he. When it speaks of being in the image of Christ, the thought is that you and I are going to be in moral similarity to our Lord Jesus Christ.

The grace, the kindness, the gentleness, the spiritual qualities and character of our Lord Jesus are going to be ours. But I'm going to know you, and you're going to know me. Each and every one of us is going to be a personal identity.

And so it is also when our Lord Jesus appeared amongst his disciples, there was a difference. There were times when they could not discern him, but there was no doubt that when they did see him, they knew that it was the very same Jesus that was crucified on Calvary's cross. He was not so different that they could not recognize him.

And so, in that resurrection state, there is not going to be such a great difference that you and I will not recognize one another. There will be that recognition of one another in that resurrection body. And so it says, we which are alive and remain shall be caught up.

Now, you notice here we have a word, rapture. People say, well, that word doesn't occur in the Bible. Well, this expression, caught up, has the thought of a rapture.

Rapture, of course, is like many English words. It's changed its meaning in the course of time. You know, that is true of some of the words in the Bible.

The word, for instance, conversation. Years ago when the Bible was translated in 1611, conversation meant the manner of life that a person lived. In the course of time, maybe it's that our lives are so much in our talk that eventually the word conversation just meant our talk, our word.

So also with the word rapture. The word rapture now has the thought of a wonderful feeling of ecstatic joy, a delightful ecstatic feeling. His soul was filled with a rapture, and yet the thought is still there.

The rapture means to be lifted up, to be caught away. And so in this word here, caught up, we have the word rapture. It means a sudden taking away.

You and I are taken away from the tribulation. You and I are taken away from our troubles. You and I are taken away from sin with all its attending evils.

You and I are caught up in a moment of time, and as it tells us here, to meet the Lord in the air. Now, this coming is very sudden. It is going to happen swiftly.

This coming is secret. The world will see nothing of it. The world will not recognize what has happened until it's all over.

This coming is selective. Only certain ones are taken. Those who are born again by the Spirit, those who have the Spirit of God within them, they are the ones who are caught up.

And caught up to what? We are caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, and that is the meeting place. We meet the Lord in the very place where Satan exercises his rule, where Satan exercises his authority. You and I are caught up, and notice here, we're taken right up into the presence of the Savior, and there in our glorified bodies, you and I will stand before him at the judgment seat of Christ.

Yes, it is true that there remains no judgment to them that are in Christ Jesus. The judgment of the great white throne will never stand before. I believe we'll all be there.

I believe we'll all stand there beside and with the Lord as he executes judgment upon every unsaved person. In the twelfth chapter of Matthew, I read that the Lord Jesus told the people of his day that because they had rejected him, the Queen of Sheba shall rise up in the judgment with them and shall condemn them. I believe that the great white throne judges.

I believe that the sinner will stand before God there. Perhaps there's someone in this audience tonight, and you're not saved, and the Lord should come. And if you should be left behind when Christ comes, and you go through the great tribulation period, and finally down to hell, and finally raised up to the judgment, I believe that if the sinner would for a moment say, before that great white throne judgment, no one ever told me.

I didn't know how to be saved. I believe that the Lord would come to me and say, Did you preach the gospel in Omaha Gospel Chapel on such and such a night? Was that soul sitting in that meeting that night and heard the story of salvation and did not receive it? Did you tell that story plainly? Did you tell how Christ, my son, died on Calvary's cross and bore sin's heavy load, rose again that that soul might be saved, that there is forgiveness through him? Did you preach that? I believe I would have to say, yes, I did. Yes, I did.

Yet he wasn't here. She wasn't listening. And I believe that at the great white throne judgment, the saved will be there behind the throne, because the entire universe will be gathered there, and I believe it will be to the condemnation, because the Lord said, The Queen of Sheba shall condemn you.

Even the people of Sodom would condemn some people in our day, because they didn't have the privilege that we had. And yet, we refuse the gospel. But there is no judgment to those who are in Christ, but the Bible does teach that we shall all stand, all shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

You and I are going to give an account of ourselves, not of our brother. You know, we like to give account of one another. It's so nice to be able to point out and look at somebody else's fault and overlook our own failures, our own shortcomings, our own deficiencies.

At the judgment seat of Christ, we shall stand before Him and give an account of ourselves. We'll give an account of what we have done for Him. We'll give an account of how we have lived for Him.

We'll give an account of our stewardship, how we have used our time and our talents, because He's given every one of us who knows the Lord Jesus, He's given each one of us a talent. You say, Me, I don't have any talent. You don't have any talent at all for the Lord or from the Lord.

You have nothing from Him that you can use for Him. I don't read in the Bible that there is a single person that belongs to Him to whom He has not given some talent. The question is, am I using this talent for the Lord? Because at the judgment seat of Christ, all these things will be brought into the light.

At the judgment seat of Christ, we'll receive His well-done. We'll receive His commendation. At the judgment seat of Christ, He'll give the honors and the privileges and the responsibilities of the kingdom to those who will administer it with Him.

Our place in the kingdom is going to be determined by the judgment seat of Christ. We'll be there. But the question is, what will be our place in the kingdom of Christ? Will we remain over one city? Will it be over five cities? Will it be over ten cities? What will be our place in the kingdom of Christ? To think that one day I'm going to stand before the Lord and I'm going to have to give an account of myself.

How that searches the heart, doesn't it? How that stirs the heart to examine my life and to examine my service and to examine my relationships with my fellow believers, to examine how I'm using the opportunity that the Lord gives to me. Am I faithful or am I neglected? The wonderful privileges and opportunities that the Lord gives to me. The awarding seat, the judgment seat of Christ, is going to be the place where we will receive our rewards.

Then comes the marriage supper of the Lamb, and then at the end of the tribulation our coming with Him to step up His kingdom. Our hope is not the grave. Our hope is not the end of the world.

Our hope is not the tribulation period. We're not looking for the end to Christ. We're not looking for this or that or the other thing.

What are we to be looking for? We're to be looking for our Lord Jesus. We're to be waiting for Him. If the Lord Jesus came today, would you be surprised? If the Lord Jesus came today, would you be ready? If the Lord Jesus Christ came today, would He find you unprepared? Oh Lord, I didn't expect You.

Would you and I be ashamed before Him at His coming? May the thought and the truth that He's coming at any moment may it affect your life and mine, your service and mine, your testimony and mine. May it affect our innermost motives, our purposes and our imaginations, because everything is going to be brought into the light of judgment day. Jesus is coming soon.

He may come tonight. What if He should? How would He find you? Would you welcome it with joy? Or would you not? Shall we pray?

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