



What Saints will be
Caught Up
on the Lord's Return ?

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It is clear to me that any doctrine which would divert from unity, or make any favoured class among the saints who compose the Church of God, cannot be the teaching of Scripture, or according to the mind of Christ. We read that He died to "gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad." (John xi. 52.) The saints of this period are those who have believed on the

Son of the Father through the word of the apostles. (John xvii. 20.) The feeblest apprehension of the grace of God has come to the weakest believer through the word of the apostles as we have it now written in the Scriptures (see Luke i. 1, 2), and the desire of the Lord for those who have believed through the apostles' word is, "That they *all* may be *one*, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee." The Lord here embraces *all* believers in *the unity of the divine love and nature*, which exists in the relationship of the Father and the Son. It is not here a unity of

mutual agreement, but of nature: "as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee." Nor is this the simple unity of Godhead, which would be impossible for the creature, but of *relationship* as it exists between the persons of the Godhead—the Father and the Son, who had become man, and here speaks as man. In this unity the Lord embraces *all* believers of this period, for it is clear that if anyone's faith is not founded on apostolic teaching as set forth in Scripture, he cannot be regarded as a believer; he cannot be built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. It

cannot, therefore, be of the Lord to teach that there should be some caught up into heavenly relationships when He comes, and some left behind; for those who believe after the rapture of the Church are only brought into earthly relationship to Christ. They will not know the privilege of those words of heavenly relationship, "As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee." That professors will be left behind to perish there can be no doubt; but we are speaking of Christians in whom there is divine workmanship, those created in Christ Jesus.

That there are, among Christians, degrees of apprehension of the grace of God, and of their relationship to the Father and to Christ, is most true. John speaks of fathers, young men, and little children; Paul speaks of babes, who need milk, and of perfect or full-grown Christians, who apprehend what perfection in Christ means and involves for them. But John makes no distinction in declaring to all to whom he wrote the fulness of apostolic knowledge: "That which *we* have seen and heard declare we unto *you*, that *ye also* may have fellowship *with us*." And,

then, he shows that the apostolic fellowship was with the Father and the Son. (1 John i. 3.) Paul, in the Epistle to the Philippians, while exhorting the perfect or full-grown Christians to be like-minded with himself, adds, "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule" (literally "keep rank"). Nor does he merely say: "Be followers of me," but "Be followers *together* of me." There is the same object for the weak and immature believer as for the full-grown Christian, for the apostle and for the Philippians. It could

not be less with those under Christ as Captain of their salvation, than it was with Moses of old, the leader of Israel, who said to Pharaoh, "We will go with our young and with our old." Can it possibly be that the Lord will leave behind some who have the work of His God and Father in their souls, sealed with His Spirit, when He comes? Who is to be caught up, if only those who have walked faithfully are caught up? Who is going to be bold enough to class himself among them? It may be said, "The Lord knows"; but the rapture ceases to be the hope

of the soul, because it is not regarded as of grace, but as of faithfulness. In 2 Corinthians i. the apostle will not make a distinction between the Corinthians and himself. He recognizes the work of God in them as in himself: he, a faithful apostle, and they, unfaithful saints. "Now He that establisheth *us with you* in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God." He looks at God's workmanship in the souls of the Corinthians (whom he had regarded as carnal and babes in Christ). In them it was encumbered with the flesh (as Lazarus was with grave-

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clothes before he was loosed), while in Paul the flesh was reckoned as crucified with Christ, so that practically in him the work of God was seen without encumbrance; and certainly the rapture will disencumber entirely the work of God in the saints from the rubbish of the flesh when Christ puts forth His conforming power.

What strikes me greatly as to this question is, that those who make a division in the unity of the flock of Christ at the rapture have no adequate sense of the *work of God* in souls. They are framing their theory according

to the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of the saints. That will all be settled at the judgment-seat of Christ, and perfectly estimated by Him. Our reward in *the kingdom* will depend upon His estimate: "Be thou over ten cities"; "Be thou over five." There is such a thing as being counted worthy of *the kingdom* for which we suffer, but there is no such thought as being counted worthy of being saved, or of being in heaven and enjoying heavenly relationship. All that is of pure grace—"to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us accepted

in the Beloved." For heaven, all is *God's workmanship*, not our works or faithfulness, His new creation in Christ. All this new creation must be with Christ in heaven, or something would be wanting for the setting forth of God's glory in Christ. Christ Himself said that He would securely keep in His own hand the sheep which belong to Him.

It is further stated that only those who look for the Lord will partake in the rapture. The verse in Hebrews ix. 28 does not certainly state this. It distinguishes Christians among the Hebrews by one of the great

characteristics of God's ancient people; viz., the expectation of Messiah, and they would not be disappointed: He would appear to them for salvation (compare Isaiah xxv. 9), having settled the question of sin at His first appearing. (Hebrews ix. 26.) That this proper expectation has waned is true, but the Spirit of God could not speak of *the waning* as characteristic of the saints, but *the expectation*. Christ sees what we cannot see. He sees the work which God has wrought in the souls of believers in order to produce affection for Christ, a going out of heart to Him; and

if anyone does not love Christ, he is not under the power of Christ's love: he is not a Christian. Affection for Christ must link itself with Christ, and so with desire for Him, which He knows and sees, though the soul may be unintelligent as to His coming; it may only look to be with Him by means of death, but the gracious Lord knows how to estimate affection, though it be ignorant, and He interprets it according to His own perception. Mary Magdalene sought the Lord in death, instead of expecting to see Him risen, according to His word. It was

ignorance, but she was the first to be given to see Him.

What I look for is the revival of affections to Christ as the Bridegroom, so that we may have more heart for Him, and then doubtless we shall intelligently wait for Him. But it would be sad to have intelligence as to the rapture, and but little desire to be with Him.

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