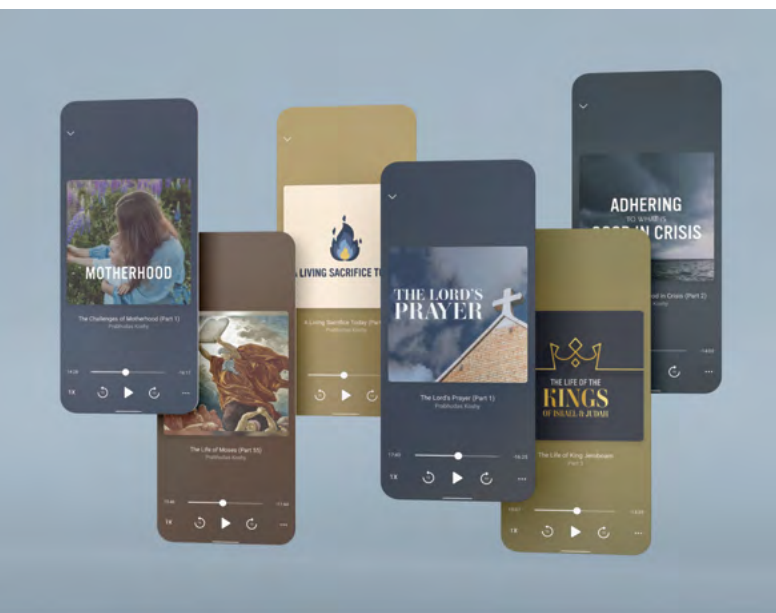


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THE RAPTURE OF SAINTS



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“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.”
—1 Thessalonians 4:17



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THE RAPTURE OF SAINTS

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WHO WILL BE IN THE RAPTURE?

Joshua Yong

The word “rapture” is derived from a Latin word which means “seizing” or “carrying off”. It corresponds to the phrase, “caught up”, found in 1 Thessalonians 4:17—“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.” The Greek word for the phrase, “caught up”, means to “grab”, “seize suddenly”, or “snatch away”. The Bible tells us here that at rapture, those who are then alive in the Lord Jesus Christ will be “caught up” together with those who have died in Christ.

The rapture is a wonderful moment when the Lord Jesus Christ will descend from heaven, and when believers will be caught up from the earth to meet the Lord Jesus Christ in the air. Those who have died in Christ will be resurrected from the grave and will rise first, and then those who are alive will be caught up to meet the Lord Jesus Christ in the air. All these will unfold in a moment, “in the twinkling of an eye”, and at the sound of the trumpet. During the rapture, the Lord Jesus Christ will not step foot on earth, but He will meet His saints in the sky. It will be a glorious moment when believers will receive the glorified body, whereby the “corruptible ... [will] put on incorruption”, and the “mortal ... put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:53). The rapture is a glorious event—but the question is: “Who will be in the rapture?”

DELIVERANCE FROM JUDGMENT

Before answering that question, we must understand the context surrounding the rapture. The Bible tells us that at the end of times, there will be a period of “Great Tribulation”. When God determines that the sins of the earth are full, He will take

His church away and will pour out His wrath and judgment upon the earth (cf. Revelation 16). It will be a time of great destruction and sorrow.

Before God unleashes His judgments upon the earth, Christ will return for His saints. This is in accordance with His promises. 1 Thessalonians 5:9 says, “For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ”. The Bible also says in 2 Peter 2:9, “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished”. The context of 2 Peter describes God’s judgment upon the unrighteous. Two examples are cited—the destruction of the old world through the flood (v. 5), and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (vv. 6–7). In these two examples, while the wicked were judged, God delivered the righteous respectively in a marvellous fashion: Noah and his family were delivered from the flood through the Ark, and Lot was delivered from the destruction in Sodom through the two angels of God.

In a similar vein, the rapture is the wonderful promise that believers have—that before God’s wrath is poured out upon the earth, God will take His church away.

DELIVERANCE FROM DEATH

Because the purpose of the rapture is to deliver God’s children from the judgment that is to come, those who will take part in the rapture will be believers. 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 tell us that there are two different groups of people involved—those who are “dead in Christ” and those who are “alive and remain”. In vv. 13–14, the apostle Paul was

encouraging the Thessalonian Christians concerning those who had already died in Christ. Paul exhorted the brethren that they “sorrow not, even as others which have no hope”. In other words, Paul was reminding believers that concerning the dead, we have a wonderful hope. So confident was the apostle in this hope that he used the word “asleep” to describe those who have died in Christ. This hope is the hope in the resurrection. Because the Lord Jesus Christ “died and rose again”, so those who are “asleep” in Christ will one day be resurrected, transformed (v. 14), and will “meet the Lord (Jesus Christ) in the air” (v. 17).

In 1 Thessalonians 4:15–17, the apostle Paul then went on to describe the hope for those who are “alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord”. The Bible says that when the trumpet sounds, those who are dead in Christ will be resurrected first, and then those who are still alive will be “caught up” or raptured to be with the Lord. The latter refer to born-again believers who believe in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. All who believe that Christ died on the cross and that He also rose again from the grave, are Christians. Every Christian has this wonderful and glorious hope!

The wonderful truth in 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 is this: when those who are still alive are caught up, it will be together with those who have died in Christ and who have been resurrected. We will all meet the Lord Jesus Christ together in the air, and will be united with the Lord and with one another forever.

COMFORT OF THE RAPTURE

1 Thessalonians 4:18 tells us to “comfort one another with these words”. “These

words” refer to the truth of the hope of the resurrection and the rapture. Knowing that every child of God will be caught up to be with Christ when He returns for His church is a wonderful assurance. Whether it is the resurrection of those who have died in Christ, or the rapture of those who are alive when Christ returns, it is a glorious and wonderful hope of what awaits every born-again believer.

The important question is whether you will be amongst those who will be caught up to be with Christ when He returns. Christ is coming again soon, and He will take His Bride, which is His church, back to be with Him. Only those who are born again in Christ will have a part in this wonderful moment. Are you born again in Christ? Have you received salvation in Christ? Only those who have Christ’s wonderful salvation can have this future hope of the resurrection and the rapture.

For those who are already born again in Christ, while we are assured of this future hope, we must be conscious of how we prepare for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must prepare by having a sense of urgency, knowing that the return of the Lord Jesus Christ is imminent. We prepare by being watchful and prayerful. We must also prepare by testifying and witnessing for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Every believer will have a part in the resurrection or the rapture. This wonderful comfort and hope encourages us to persevere through the trials we may face. It also motivates us to continue to labour diligently for the Lord, until He returns again for us. ■

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THE IMMINENCE OF RAPTURE

Prabhudas Koshy

The rapture of saints will occur when Christ returns for His saints. The return of Christ is one of Scripture’s central promises, described with a sense of imminence and urgency. The Bible consistently emphasises that His coming and the events connected to it could occur at any moment, urging believers to live in constant readiness and spiritual vigilance.

IMMINENCE OF CHRIST’S RETURN IN SCRIPTURE

The apostle Paul (in Philippians 4:5) declares, “Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.” The Greek word (*eggús*) translated as “at hand” conveys the idea of nearness or immediacy, underscoring that Christ’s return is always imminent.



Moreover, the apostle James reinforces this theme in James 5:7–9, “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord... Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh... behold, the judge standeth before the door.” This imagery powerfully illustrates how close and certain Christ's return truly is!

The writer of Hebrews also speaks of this “approaching” day in Hebrews 10:24–25, “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works... and so much the more, as ye see the day (of Christ's return) approaching.” In Hebrews 10:37, the writer further reaffirmed the certainty of Christ's return: “For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.”

This urgency is furthermore echoed by the apostle Peter: “But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer” (1 Peter 4:7). Peter here highlights the course of eschatological (pertaining to last days) events that will be consummated, as imminent. It is a sober reminder to the readers of his letter, that the return of Jesus Christ could be at any moment, and hence, to live expectantly in the light of Christ's return.

That's not all. The apostle John adds to this sense of urgency concerning the eschatological events in 1 John 2:18—“Little children, it is the last time... whereby we know that it is the last time.” The phrase, “last time” (Greek, *eschatē hōra*), indicates the final hour, stressing the nearness of eschatological fulfilment.

It is, therefore, not surprising to detect the distinct tone of urgency when John introduces the visions of Revelation, which he describes as “things which must shortly come to pass” (Revelation 1:1). He reiterates this imminence in Revelation 1:3—“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy... for the time is at hand.” The imminence of His return is emphasised by Jesus Himself in Revelation 3:11—“Behold, I come quickly”. This same promise is echoed in Revelation 22:7—“Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.”

INSTANTANEITY OF THE RAPTURE

The apostle Paul provides the clearest articulation of the rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17, “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: 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.” The phrase, “caught up”, comes from the Greek word (*harpazō*) which means “to seize, snatch, or take away”. This depicts a sudden and dramatic event, where believers are taken from the earth to be with the Lord.

Similarly, 1 Corinthians 15:51–52 describes the instantaneity of the transformation of believers that happen at the rapture: “Behold, I shew 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.” This passage highlights the instantaneous nature of the rapture and the glorification of believers.

UNCERTAINTY OF THE TIMING

While Scripture affirms the imminence of Christ's return and the events attached to it, it also stresses that no one knows the exact time. Jesus distinctly warns, “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come” (Matthew 24:42); “Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Matthew 24:44); “But of that day and that hour (of the coming of the Son of man) knoweth no man... Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is” (Mark 13:32–33).

MANIFESTATION OF PATIENCE IN THE DELAY

Some may question the apparent delay in Christ's return, as Peter had

anticipated: “Where is the promise of his coming?” (2 Peter 3:4). However, Peter provides a clear explanation in 2 Peter 3:8–9, “one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” The delay is not due to negligence, but a manifestation of divine patience, giving humanity more time to turn to Him.

LIVING IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST'S IMMINENT RETURN

Though we cannot pinpoint the day or hour, every passing moment brings us closer to Christ's return. Almost two thousand years have passed since these promises were given, yet the call remains the same: “Be ready.” The certainty of Christ's imminent return should inspire watchfulness, prayerfulness, and a life devoted to God.

The imminence of the rapture is a cornerstone of the Christian hope. It reminds us that Christ's return for His church is not only certain, but could happen at any moment. This truth calls for watchfulness, holiness, and fervent service. As we await our blessed hope, let us live faithfully, proclaiming the Gospel and encouraging one another with the assurance that we will soon be with the Lord forever. “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20). ■

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“We shall not all sleep,
but we shall all be
changed, in a moment,
in the twinkling of an
eye, at the last trump...
we shall be changed.”
—1 Corinthians 15:51–52



BE READY FOR RAPTURE

Jose Lagapa

NO ONE KNOWS WHEN

Throughout history, numerous predictions have been made regarding the date of the return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which will bring about the rapture of the saints (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17). Clearly, all of these predictions have been proven to be incorrect! Jesus Himself says, “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. ... Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come” (Matthew 24:36–37, 42).

In today’s world that is rife with fake news and conspiracy theories, we must remain vigilant and discerning. We cannot afford to disregard the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, who commands us to watch and pray, for no one knows the hour of His return. It has been a cunning strategy of Satan to send false prophets and pastors to predict the timing of Jesus’ return, aiming to dull our senses to the true moment of His second coming. Today, countless professing Christians are preoccupied with worldly pursuits, neglecting the urgency of Christ’s return and the imminence of the rapture. Many who claim to be Christians will find themselves unprepared to meet with the Lord. We must stand firm and be ready! Let us prepare ourselves so that when He returns, we are not taken by surprise or left behind.

WHAT BEING READY ENTAILS

So, what does it take to be truly ready? Being ready means embracing genuine

repentance and placing unwavering faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Moreover, there are essential truths that must be understood for us to be fully prepared for His coming.

First and foremost, understand the **purpose** of Jesus’ return. Those who long to meet the Lord and enter His Kingdom will be fully prepared. When He returns, He will transform all believers, granting them new bodies suited for His kingdom. Every born-again believer will receive glorified bodies that will be incorruptible for eternity. “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:53–57). Oh, what glorious end—even “the redemption of our body” (Romans 8:23; cf. 1 John 3:2)!

Secondly, understand the **unknowability** of the exact timing of His return. Jesus compares the timing of His coming to that of a thief—just as a burglar does not announce his arrival, so too will Jesus not reveal the precise moment of His return. “But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think

not the Son of man cometh” (Matthew 24:43–44). But one thing is certain: He will come again! Nevertheless, Jesus did provide us with signs to indicate the proximity of His return. This makes it clear that we can prepare ourselves to be vigilant and ready, in the same way that we can be watchful and guard against potential burglary. Realising that Jesus could return at any moment, believers must be diligent in their preparations at all times.

Thirdly, understand the **manner** of His return. Today, we are confronted with numerous deceivers and imposters who falsely claim to be Christ who has returned (cf. Matthew 24:5, 24). It's essential to study the Bible to know exactly how Jesus will return, ensuring that the Christ we encounter is the true one, not a counterfeit. Scripture has provided a clear unfolding of momentous events surrounding the manner of Christ's return. “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

To be a Christian means to truly embody the name of Christ, to deny oneself, and to take up the cross... These are the ones whom Jesus will return for.

them which are asleep. 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: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up (referring to the rapture) together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:15–17). Equip yourself with biblical knowledge, that you may not be misled by the false claims around you. To be forewarned (by Scripture) is to be forearmed. And that is one indispensable way to be prepared and be ready.

WHO JESUS IS RETURNING FOR

Ultimately, we must recognise who Jesus will return for. Many will claim the status of “Christian” without any real cost to their lives. When He comes again, the truth about their faith—whether genuine or false—will be revealed. Being a Christian is far more than just a label or a pastime; it's not about appearing religious while indulging in worldly pursuits. To be a Christian means to truly embody the name of Christ, to deny oneself, and to take up the cross. It involves a commitment to a life marked by trials and self-denial, living in obedience to God's Word and being aligned with His divine plan. These are the ones whom Jesus will return for. Will you be among them?

Only those who have genuinely repented of their sins and placed their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will be raptured or “caught up” with Him when He returns. It is essential that we honestly assess whether we have recognised our sinfulness and fully

trusted in Jesus as the One who is our Righteousness. Oh, may we make sure of our salvation, which shall pave the way for our participation in this glorious and unparalleled event, namely the rapture of the saints! “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (1 John 3:1–3).

Dear Christian, are you ready? When the Lord Jesus returns in your lifetime, will you stand among those who will join Him in the rapture? Do you eagerly anticipate His coming? The time for decision is now! Once He returns and gathers His faithful, the

Great Tribulation will unfold, bringing unimaginable tumult and judgments to this world. After the seven-year Great Tribulation, Jesus will return to judge all humanity and establish His kingdom on earth for a thousand years. Following that, this world will face destruction, and God will create “a new heaven and a new earth” (Revelation 21:1; cf. 2 Peter 3:13), along with the “new Jerusalem” (cf. Revelation 21:2–3). Only those who recognise Jesus as their Lord and Saviour will dwell eternally in His Kingdom. Those who reject Him will have no part in the rapture nor in God's kingdom. Rather, they will face eternal torment in the “lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15). So, be ready before it's too late! ■

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CHRISTIANS' RESURRECTION

Samuel Joseph

INTRODUCTION

Since the fall, mankind has been dogged by death: it is the penalty for sin. As creatures conceived and born in sin, it is the sentence under which, by nature, we all live. The apostle Paul describes the human race as being held in bondage “through fear of death” (Hebrews 2:15); it is the “last enemy” (1 Corinthians 15:26)! It lies at the end of life’s road for all of us; it is the gateway to the judgment we secretly dread (Hebrews 9:27). It is that which reveals most clearly and inescapably, the vanity of life in this fallen world “under the sun” (cf. Ecclesiastes 2:16–18).

By contrast, the glorious hope of the Christian lies in the victory over death achieved by the Lord Jesus Christ. When He rose from the dead on the third day, He signified His triumph over the “last enemy”, and gives us assurance that in Him we are delivered from the “sting” of death (1 Corinthians 15:55). His resurrection gives us the “lively hope” (1 Peter 1:3) that we will one day also be “planted together... in the likeness of his resurrection” (Romans 6:5).

Inasmuch then as death is central to the dreadful reality of our condition under sin, and deliverance from death is central to the wonderful message of the Gospel, it behoves us as Christians to consider the topic of our resurrection. The Christians’ resurrection is that blessed moment when that triumph over death is fully realised in our case—when death is “swallowed up in victory” (1 Corinthians 15:54). Inasmuch as death is that enemy which entered in since the fall, and which most oppresses and terrifies men, it is of the greatest importance (and comfort) to know the truth about what comes after.

THE STATE OF MEN AFTER DEATH

As we approach the subject of resurrection, however, we must first understand what physical death is, and what it entails both for the Christian and for the unbeliever. Physical death consists in the separation of the two basic parts of human nature: the body (the material part) and the soul (the immaterial part). Death, then, is the dissolution of what was initially brought together in the creation of man (cf. Genesis 2:7).

At the point of death, man enters into what is known as the “intermediate state”, awaiting the resurrection. Body and soul are separated, not permanently, but temporarily. During this period, the physical body goes through the process of decay and corruption (a consequence of the fall; cf. Genesis 3:19)—which is true for both believers and unbelievers. The redemption purchased by Christ certainly includes the redemption of the body, but there is a delay, as it were, in the believer’s full enjoyment of this bodily redemption.

The soul of man, however, goes on to a quite different destiny, and here there is a marked distinction between the experience of the believer and the unbeliever. In the case of believers, there is perfection in holiness, reception into heaven, and the continuous, conscious experience of the presence of God (2 Corinthians 5:6–8, Philippians 1:21–23). In the case of unbelievers, there is conscious torment in a separate place and anticipation of the final judgment (Luke 16:23; cf. Acts 1:25b). This condition is irreversible—yet it is “intermediate” in the sense that this

experience is itself only a foretaste of that consummation which is to come, upon both believers and unbelievers.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

The resurrection, then, consists in the reunion of body and soul, with transformation of the body, to be fitted for eternity. It marks the conclusion of the “intermediate state”. Scripture teaches that there are two resurrections: a resurrection of believers; and a resurrection of unbelievers. Or to use Biblical terminology, a resurrection of the “just”, which is to “everlasting life”; and a resurrection of the “unjust”, which is to “everlasting contempt” (Acts 24:15; Daniel 12:2).

There are similarities between the two resurrections. Both involve the raising of dead bodies. Of course, there will be one particular generation of believers who “shall not... sleep” (1 Corinthians 15:51), but who, Scripture says, will be raptured or “caught up” (1 Thessalonians 4:17), to meet the Lord together with the resurrected believers (who have died in Christ), at the point of Christ’s return. Both resurrections, by implication, involve the transforming of bodies, with the identity of those bodies preserved.

However, there is a clear difference—the bodies of believers are raised to honour, whereas the bodies of unbelievers are raised to dishonour. Herein is a great mystery, for these are things we cannot now comprehend: things of that new age to come, which we can only glimpse from what is revealed in Scripture. Nevertheless, the apostle Paul makes it clear that this new

body will be quite different from the old; it will be fitted for that eternal state (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:35–48). The bodies of believers will be fitted for glory; they will “bear the image of the heavenly” (1 Corinthians 15:49). The bodies of unbelievers, in some way which we cannot imagine, will be fitted for the everlasting torments of the lake of fire (cf. Revelation 20:12–15).

There is also a temporal (time) distinction between the resurrection of believers, and that of unbelievers. The coming of the Lord for His saints is placed before the Millennium, which is recognised as a literal, earthly, thousand-year reign of Christ. The “first resurrection” (i.e. of believers), then, begins with the “rapture”, while the resurrection of unbelievers takes place at the end of the Millennial reign (cf. Revelation 20). This “second resurrection” will be unto judgment and condemnation: unbelievers will be raised and judged, each according to his works, and found guilty, worthy of eternal death in “the lake of fire” (vv.

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12–15). This will be, not annihilation, but conscious physical and spiritual torment of the whole man, body and soul, forever and ever, without remedy and without any hope of restoration! Scripture solemnly declares, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power” (Revelation 20:6a). Oh, may God grant that everyone reading these words would, through Jesus Christ, have part in the first resurrection, and not the second!

CONCLUSION

These are matters which are sometimes controversial in terms of the details involved. Christians do not all agree on the precise timing of the resurrection, or the timetable of events associated with the Lord’s return. Yet we should not allow such disagreements to mire us in controversy, such that we miss the wonder and glory of what is clearly revealed. Nor should we miss the dire warning implied in this revelation. Physical death, which lies now before each one of us, is not the end of all things, but the gateway to eternity. The life which we live today, has consequences which we will enjoy—or suffer—forever!

There is then a choice placed before each one of us. There are two resurrections, leading to two eternal states respectively: a holy city, and a lake of fire. We are in Adam, or in Christ. There are no other options. All who are in Adam die eternally, whereas all who are in Christ are made alive forever (1 Corinthians 15:22)! Will you have your part in the second resurrection—whereby you will stand before the throne, in your

sins, and receive a sentence of eternal punishment? Or will you have your part in the first resurrection—whereby you will stand accepted in Christ, and enter into the joy of the Lord?

Dear reader, these things to come are revealed to us now through God’s Word (cf. Deuteronomy 29:29), because today is the day of salvation. There is a finality to physical death, after which there is an irreversible trajectory towards eternal life or eternal death. The time to decide is now. If you will repent of your sins and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for your sins and rose again, you will be forever delivered from eternal death. Why delay? Believe in Christ, be made alive, live for Him now, and be assured of eternal life with Him forever! ■

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Wang Ming Dao

(1900-1991) - Part V

Retold by Jenny Lok
Layout & Art by Andronicus Koshy

One evening in the autumn of 1914, Yong-Shung met up with the senior student who led him to Christ that spring.

Yong-Shung, do you have any plans after finishing your studies in the future?

A brief moment of silence followed.

I have no special plans to do anything. I would follow where my mind leads me.

That will not do. A young man must have a sense of purpose in his life.

As the wise saying goes, 'It is the purposeful [one] who [gains] success.'

Do pray about this matter and ask for God's leading

Still fresh from his new-found faith, Yong-Shung started to ponder on how to make good of his life.

It is often said that,

'When a fox dies, it leaves a skin; when a man dies, he leaves a reputation.'

狐死留皮
人死留名

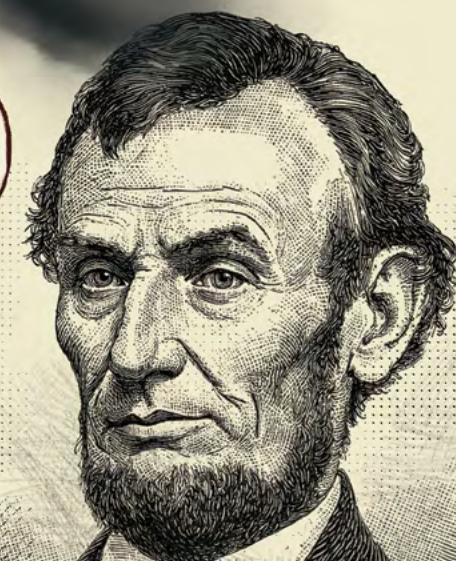


To gain a good name for myself, I must do something great or prominent.

So maybe, I shall be a politician because I can influence people and leave an impact on them!

Since then, Yong-Shung aimed to be like the late American president Abraham Lincoln, who became his main inspiration to reach the goal of being an esteemed political figure.

Even as Yong-Shung's heart was inclined to being a politician, he became conscious of God's calling to be a preacher when he turned fifteen.



Nonetheless, he resisted God's voice and reasoned within himself,

Being a politician is far more glorious than being a mere preacher.

To give up the outstanding role of a politician for a lowly preaching position is likened to coming down from the lofty tree to a deep, dark valley!

I had met some preachers some time ago.

Quite a number of them thought they knew something about the Scriptures, and had learnt to sing a hymn or two. Not having fully understood the doctrines in the Bible, they went on to become preachers.

Worst of all, there were others who ended up in the Bible school because they did poorly in their school or college!

Yong-Shung prided himself on the fact that he was not like any of those unworthy self-proclaimed preachers.

Well, I've won many prizes for my good results in school and that had helped to pay for my school fees. It would be a waste of my talent to serve as a lowly preacher. No, I definitely cannot be a preacher!

For the next three years of his life (aged fifteen to eighteen), Yong-Shung fought against any thoughts of God's calling to be a preacher.

I am determined to become a politician. Surely, I'll be one!

However, in mid-1918, Yong-Shung became seriously ill. He suffered from extreme tiredness, high fever, dizziness and loss of appetite. Yong-Shung remained very sick for over a month. He returned to school in early May only to become unwell again in mid-May. Despite that, Yong-Shung managed to sit for his Middle School examination for the first two days. He had three more days of exams to go for, but his health took a turn for the worse, and he was bed-bound again.



The doctor had said to Yong-Shung's sister,

Your brother's sickness is incurable.

I have tried different medication on him but he is not getting any better.

As he lay on his bed, Yong-Shung began to reflect on his life and prayed unto the Lord,

Oh Lord, here I am, feeling so weak, helpless and utterly without hope.

There is no way I can be a politician without disobeying Thy calling. I deserve to die, but if Thou show mercy to me and heal me, I promise I would not go against Thy will again!

With that, Yong-Shung submitted his life fully to the Lord. Miraculously, Yong-Shung recovered towards end-June, and was in time to graduate from Middle School. By God's grace, the school allowed him to graduate like his peers because of his consistent good results, despite not having completed his Middle School exams.

After the Middle School course, Yong-Shung was ready to start his university education – two years of the Preparatory Course followed by four years of the Regular Course. In the middle of 1919, towards the end of his first year of Preparatory Course, Yong-Shung waited in vain for the required permission from the school authority to take the examination for the Regular Course, which would qualify him to complete his university studies over the next four years.

1917 1918 1919 1920 1921 1922 1923 1924

Any hope of a university education seemed to be completely dashed!

What shall I do now?

Romans 14:8 – "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

Feeling rather dejected, Yong-Shung sought the Lord, and was comforted by two portions of Scripture:

Isaiah 54:8, 10 – "... with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, ... my kindness shall not depart from thee ..."

Yong-Shung was immensely comforted by God's words of assurance and promises.

He came to a decision:

First, I will look for a temporary job and then aim to enter university at a later time. Since I have not done too badly for my studies so far, and many who know me have a good opinion of me, maybe I can find a job soon enough!

But when it was nearing the end of August, Yong-Shung was still not given a single job offer! How desperate and distressed he was indeed!

Yong-Shung then decided to pay a visit to the same senior friend from Middle School (who once shared the Gospel with him).

Yong-Shung, do not be disheartened by the lack of a job. What you need now is a brief respite from your stress and anxiety.

Yong-Shung let out a deep sigh.

Yes, perhaps. But where shall I go?

Well, I understand that the Board of Education of the Christian Churches (from both the provinces of Hubei and Shansi) would be meeting in Tung-Hsien.

You should make a trip there to join them.

In fact, you'll get to see some familiar faces in that gathering!

I'm not exactly in the mood to meet anyone. My desire is to be left alone!

Just give it a try. Take it as time away to seek the Lord and pray about your situation

Not wanting to disappoint his friend, Yong-Shung said,

I'll heed your advice. May God grant me grace to seek His will in my life.

In Tung-Hsien, Yong-Shung had a pleasant surprise! An old friend spotted him and went forward to shake his hands.

Yong-Shung, how are you? We have not met for about three to four years!

I'm surprised to see you here! Well, I came here to attend a meeting but will be returning to Peking soon.

So, are you still studying or working?

No, nothing. Right now, I'm actually looking for a job.

I see. Oh, by the way, there is a teaching position at a primary school in Baoding. Would you be interested?

Teaching in a primary school in Baoding?

Yes, your job is to teach lower primary students. For a married teacher, the school is paying \$12 a month while an unmarried teacher will get about \$9.60, that is 80% of \$12.

No, I don't think the job is suitable for me. I'm so sorry!

Please think about it. Do not reject it so hastily. Anyway, you have until the end of August to give your answer.

To be continued

BIBLE TRIVIA—JOSHUA 6

SARAH YONG

A. Read the whole passage in Joshua 6, and then fill in each blank with an appropriate word taken from the Bible passage, to complete the biblical episode below of the Israelites’ conquest of Jericho.

The LORD commanded Joshua to circumcise the children of Israel who had been born in the wilderness before allowing the people to claim the covenant land that God had promised to them. The city of Jericho was 1) _____ shut up because its inhabitants feared the children of Israel. Then the LORD told 2) _____ that He would give them victory over the city, the king, and the mighty men of Jericho. Subsequently, for 3) _____ days, all the men of war of the children of Israel were to go round about the city once, together with seven 4) _____ who would be bearing seven trumpets of rams’ horns going before the ark.

Joshua instructed the people as the LORD had commanded. The armed men went before the priests that blew the trumpets, followed by the ark of the 5) _____ of the LORD. Joshua specifically commanded the people, “Ye shall not 6) _____, ... neither shall any word proceed out of your 7) _____, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.” Thus, they quietly encircled the city for six days.

It came to pass on the 8) _____ day, that they rose up early and encircled the city seven times. After the seventh time, the priests blew a long blast with the 9) _____, and Joshua charged the people: “Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city. And the city shall be 10) _____, even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the 11) _____ ... But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are 12) _____ unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.”

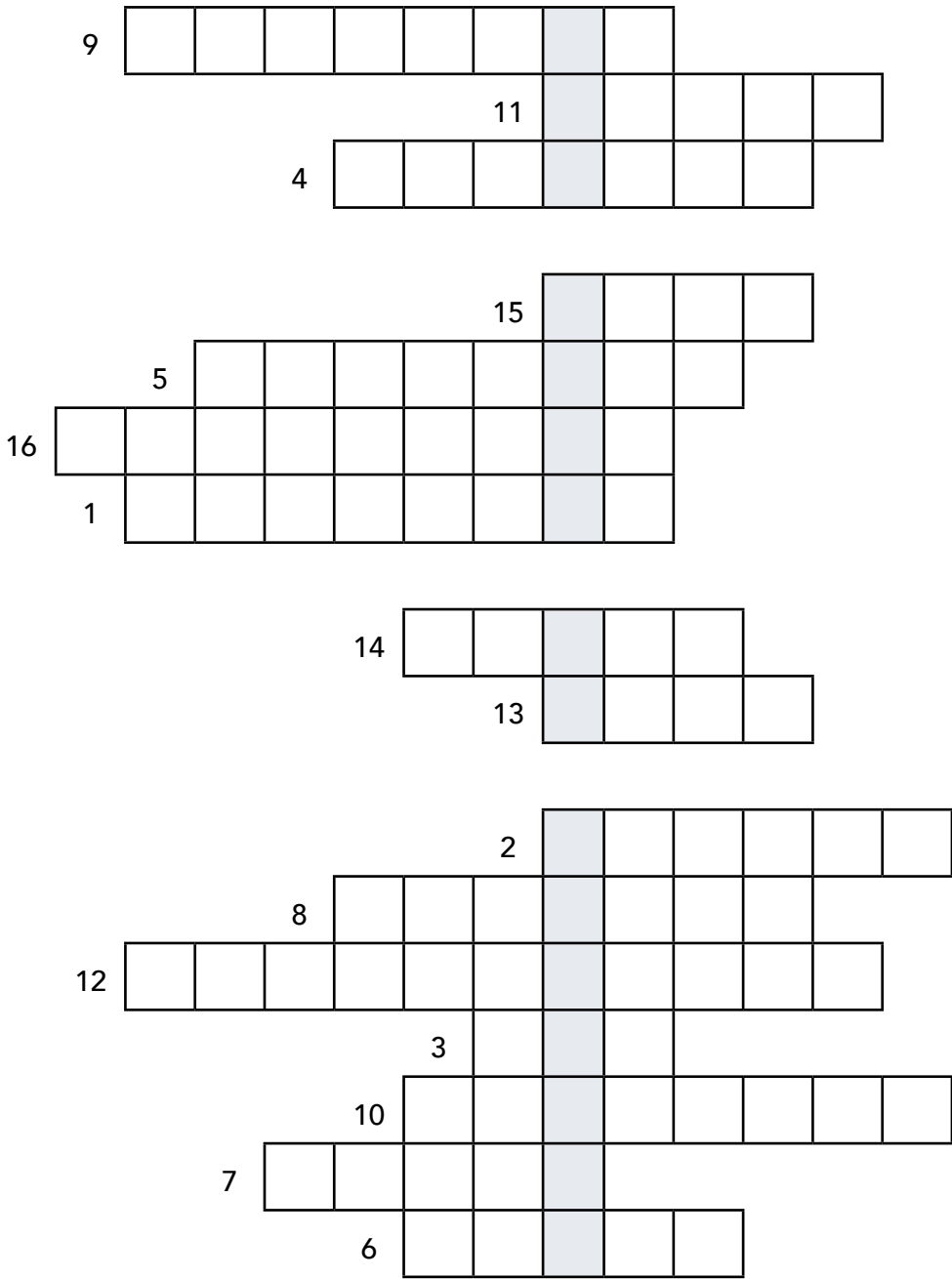
The people shouted in obedient response, and the wall of Jericho fell down 13) _____. This enabled the people to go up into the city, and they utterly destroyed all that was in the city with the edge of the 14) _____. Finally, they burnt the city with 15) _____, and all that was therein. But Joshua saved Rahab and her father's 16) _____, and all that she had, because she hid the messengers, whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

Answers to Bible Trivia—Joshua 5 (Vol. 24, Iss. 5, p. 30–31)

Part A: 1) Jordan; 2) melted; 3) spirit; 4) wilderness; 5) rolled; 6) Gilgal; 7) unleavened; 8) manna; 9) fruit; 10) worship; 11) holy
Part B: 1) Red sea; 2) Abraham; 3) Moses

B. Fill in each answer from the blanks in the above story onto the crossword below, according to its corresponding number. A phrase will then be revealed by reading vertically down the shaded column of this crossword, which depicts this story’s title.

What is the title? _____



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