

Christ Gathers His Flock

1 Cor. 15:50-58;

1 Thess. 4:13-18;

1 John 2:28-3:3

I. Rapture Brings New Bodies - 1Cor. 15:50-58

1. The problem we face – 50
Addressed to brethren (believers)
Flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom
Jesus said "You must be born again" - Jn. 3:3-7
A regenerated spirit – Eph. 2:5
Not just the spirit, our bodies must be renewed
The "perishable cannot inherit the imperishable"
Our bodies are cursed with mortality (death)
2. Paul reveals new truth given to him by God – 51
"Behold I tell you a mystery" (mysterion - Greek)
New truth given to Paul
"We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed"
This "natural body must become a spiritual body" – 15:44
This happens to believers at resurrection
But when the trumpet sounds living believers also change
This transformation will happen instantaneously
"In a moment" "the twinkling of an eye"
3. At trumpet sound all believers are transformed– 51-53
"The dead will be raised imperishable"
"And we (believers living) shall be changed"
The dead body becomes imperishable
And the mortal body puts on immortality
"Mortality is swallowed up of life" – 2 Cor. 5:4
4. This is the fulfillment of God's eternal plan – 54-57
Jesus Christ won that victory in a battle over death
5. This newly revealed truth should impact us – 58
Being "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the Lord's work"
Knowing "your work in the Lord is not in vain"
That work will be evaluated & rewarded – 1 Cor. 3:10-15

II. Rapture Brings Reunion – 1 Thess. 4:13-18

1. The problem we face – 13
The loss we feel when a believer dies
Paul shares God's truth with remaining believers
Don't be uninformed about "believer's death"
Your grief should not be like those who have no hope
2. Hear God's truth about your loss – 14-15
Your loss will not be permanent – 14
Jesus conquered death for us & our believing loved-ones
When Christ returns He will bring those believers with Him
Paul shares what he received from the Lord – 15
Believers who remain until Lord's coming will not go before those who died

3. When the Lord returns to gather His flock – 16
He will come celebrating His triumph - 16
He will descend with a cry of command
With the voice of an archangel
With the sound of the trumpet of God
Bringing those who died with Him
And the dead in Christ will rise first
Receiving their new immortal bodies
4. Then, the ones alive, left on earth – 17
Will be "caught up" (Greek word used of Paul – 2 Cor. 12:4)
Into the clouds with those who came with Christ
To meet the Lord in the air
And so we will always be with the Lord
Safe in His loving care before God's wrath is poured out on world
In the time of Great Tribulation
The Lord's redeemed people are with Him & our loved ones
5. This Revealed Truth brings comfort – 18
And provides words to encourage one another
Since we do not know when Christ will come
Our gathering together may not be too long

III. Rapture Restores God's Image - 1 Jn. 2:28-3:3

1. The Problem we face – 2:28
Faithfully abiding in Christ awaiting His coming
John addresses them as "little children"
We are born again into God's family
But we need to grow & develop in our walk with Christ
We don't want to experience shame when He comes
Knowing He is righteous we need to practice righteousness
2. God's love pronounces us as His children – 3:1
It isn't easy to abide in Christ in a world that doesn't know Him
God's plan for us is to bring us to Christ-likeness – Rom. 8:28-29
3. Think of this glorious future transformation – 3:2
When He appears, we shall be like Him
Because we will see Him as He is
This brings each believer into a full conformity to Christ
Reflecting all that He has accomplished in us
God created humans in "His own image" Gen.1:26-27
That image must be restored if we are to live forever with Him
4. God's truth encourages us to seek His purity now – 3
Fulness for this truth must await His coming
But should we not be moving in that direction

