

APPENDIX 7 – HOW CAN WE BE RAPTURED

The Apostle John, in a profound vision, witnessed a multitude of people who had been raptured. An elder from Heaven approached him and inquired, “Who are these individuals adorned in white robes?” The elder then proceeded to reveal that these were the ones who had endured the great Tribulation (the first three and a half years), and their robes had been cleansed by the precious blood of Jesus.

Revelation 7:13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they? ¹⁴ And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great Tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (KJV)

The vision of a vast multitude standing before the throne, their robes purified and made white in the blood of the Lamb, should stir within us a crucial question – How did they achieve this purification? What is their secret? How can we attain this level of purity? First and foremost, we must acknowledge the need for our own robes to be purified. In simple terms, we are all sinners. Our greatest challenge may lie in our failure to fully recognize our inherent sinfulness and our inability to fully atone for our transgressions.

The Apostle Paul, in a moment of deep introspection, lamented in Romans 7:24, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” The prophet Isaiah, recognizing his own imperfections, confessed in Isaiah 6:5, “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.” And Jeremiah the prophet, acknowledging the deceitfulness of the human heart, stated in Jeremiah 17:9, “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it?” Even Peter, one of Jesus' closest disciples, humbly admitted his sinful nature in Luke 5:8, “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”

If we could fully comprehend the enormity of our sins and the insurmountable debt, we owe. We, too, would feel the same despair. How can we come to a better realization of our debt? One way is to earnestly pray for God's kingdom to come. This prayer invites the Father's presence, ensuring the accompaniment of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, acting as a mirror, reflects our true nature, helping us understand the chasm our sins have created between us and the Father. He guides us to the realization that no human effort can atone for the penalty of our transgressions. Only the blood of Jesus, His sacrificial death on the cross, can lift our sins. And, by being in His presence, we are adopted as His children.

If we ask the Father for His kingdom's presence, the Spirit will keep us deeply anchored in the Father's boundless love. He teaches us to believe that we are created to worship God wholeheartedly. He teaches us the value of trusting in Jesus. He helps us reject the devil's voice and listen closely to the voice of Jesus. He teaches us to walk faithfully with our Savior, abiding in His love always.

The Holy Spirit goes beyond making us aware of our shortcomings; He instills a hatred for sin. He teaches us about Jesus and ingrains the knowledge that Jesus has borne the cost of our transgressions. He cultivates a heart of joy within us, a desire to remain in communion, and a yearning to align with Him and place unwavering faith in Jesus. He teaches us to open the door of our hearts to Jesus and to listen to His voice. He helps us forsake the deceptive voice of the Devil.

How do we receive the Holy Spirit in our lives? The Apostle Paul gives us an example of how. In his prayer, Paul asked the Father to empower the church in Ephesus through His Spirit so that Christ could dwell within their hearts.

Ephesians 3:16 I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. ¹⁷ Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. ¹⁸ And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. ¹⁹ May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then, you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. (NLT)

When we ask the Father to fill us with His presence, the Holy Spirit will guide us, Christ will dwell within us, and we can experience a steadfast and intimate presence with God. Our lives will be deeply rooted in His love. And we will begin to look forward to being raptured. Another reason why we need His constant presence is so that we can pass the love test. Love, as articulated in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, is:

1 Corinthians 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres ⁸ love never fails. (NKJV).

We would all do well to engage in some self-reflection. Perhaps we can ask ourselves,

- How frequently do I display characteristics that starkly oppose the love chapter?
- How often have I been impatient, unkind, or envious in the haste of my daily endeavors?
- Have there been moments when I may have spoken arrogantly or with a proud tone?
- Have I regarded my peers with a negative eye or found myself consumed by my own conceits?
- Have there been occasions when my anger flared too quickly within me or where old slights were not so readily forgotten?
- When have I favored shadows and deceit over truth?

If we err even once or twice in a day, we need God's constant presence.

Furthermore, as imperfect beings, we can lift prayers for our families and churches, asking the Father for His empowering presence for them as well.