

Ask The Rabbi – June 8, 2021 (Part 2)

Question:

I feel I don't have a clear understanding of the timeline of end times. The what and when of events we can expect. Growing up I was taught about the rapture or the catching away. What is this and how should I understand the meaning of it?

How do I come back with an answer when others argue the following verses that they see as “rapture” verses?

If the Rapture is not true, how do you explain Matt 24:40-41 and Luke 17:34-37.

Response:

The term Rapture has become synonymous in Church teaching and is understood to be a “hidden” or “secret” return of Yeshua, prior to His very public return. Unfortunately, there are no distinct verses that speak specifically to this event occurring. What has occurred is a misappropriation of verses speaking specifically of one event, that being the return of Yeshua and identified as the Resurrection...

Joh 11:23 Yeshua said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

Joh 11:24 Marta said, "I know that he will rise again at the Resurrection on the Last Day."

Joh 11:25 Yeshua said to her, "I AM the Resurrection and the Life! Whoever puts his trust in me will live, even if he dies;

Joh 11:26 and everyone living and trusting in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

Joh 11:27 She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

Last week we looked at 1 Thessalonians 4:13 – 18, one of three Scripture passages found in the New Covenant writings that have become synonymous with the “Rapture” Doctrine. Tonight we will explore the second, found in 1 Corinthians 15:50 – 58.

Interestingly, both passages were authored by Sha'ul who was not one of the original 12 talmidim of Yeshua, yet seems to have a strong grasp on Yeshua's resurrection and that of the resurrection that is to occur upon His return. Further, I don't believe it is Sha'ul's writings that are the challenge here but the comprehension and thus understanding of what He is expressing. Sha'ul was one of immense knowledge and understanding...

Php 3:3 For it is we who are the Circumcised, we who worship by the Spirit of God and make our boast in the Messiah Yeshua! We do not put confidence in human qualifications,

Php 3:4 even though I certainly have grounds for putting confidence in such things. If anyone else thinks he has grounds for putting confidence in human qualifications, I have better grounds:

Php 3:5 b'rit-milah on the eighth day, by birth belonging to the people of Isra'el, from the tribe of Binyamin, a Hebrew-speaker, with Hebrew-speaking parents, in regard to the Torah, a Parush,

Php 3:6 in regard to zeal, a persecutor of the Messianic Community, in regard to the righteousness demanded by legalism, blameless.

Sha'ul's writings further substantiate his understanding on all matters pertaining to Yeshua, the Resurrection and the Kingdom. Sha'ul's first letter to the community at Corinth set out to address many issues residing within the community - Spirit of divisiveness; Sexual misbehavior; Appeals to pagan law courts; Celibacy,

Marriage, Divorce; Food sacrificed to idols; Disorders in public worship; Disorder at the Lord's Supper; and The Resurrection of the Dead.

The Resurrection of the Dead, a prominent issue in Corinth as it was in Thessalonica. The passage that Sha'ul wrote to the Corinthians that has become part of the "Rapture" doctrine is...

1Co 15:50 Let me say this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot share in the Kingdom of God, nor can something that decays share in what does not decay.

1Co 15:51 Look, I will tell you a secret—not all of us will die! But we will all be changed!

1Co 15:52 It will take but a moment, the blink of an eye, at the final shofar. For the shofar will sound, and the dead will be raised to live forever, and we too will be changed.

1Co 15:53 For this material which can decay must be clothed with imperishability, this which is mortal must be clothed with immortality.

1Co 15:54 When what decays puts on imperishability and what is mortal puts on immortality, then this passage in the Tanakh will be fulfilled: "Death is swallowed up in victory. (Yesha'yahu 25:8)

1Co 15:55 "Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting?" (Hoshea 13:14)

1Co 15:56 The sting of death is sin; and sin draws its power from the Torah;

1Co 15:57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Yeshua the Messiah!

1Co 15:58 So, my dear brothers, stand firm and immovable, always doing the Lord's work as vigorously as you can, knowing that united with the Lord your efforts are not in vain.

As with Sha'ul's letter to the Thessalonians, he conveys the same aspect pertaining to the mystery / secret of those who have died in relation to we who still remain alive. Therefore, in order to truly understand these concluding verses of chapter 15, we must first go to the beginning of the chapter.

Now, brothers, I must remind you of the Good News - 1 Corinthians 15:1 – 2:

1Co 15:1 Now, brothers, I must remind you of the Good News which I proclaimed to you, and which you received, and on which you have taken your stand,

1Co 15:2 and by which you are being saved—provided you keep holding fast to the message I proclaimed to you. For if you don't, your trust will have been in vain.

Sha'ul immediately places the question of resurrection in the context of the Gospel because belief in the resurrection is an indispensable component of it, not a side issue ([1Co_15:3-34](#)).

Only after reminding the Corinthians how important resurrection is can he address the difficulty which prevented some from believing in it, namely, their inability to imagine how it could happen ([1Co_15:35-58](#)).

Compare 1 Corinthians 15:3 – 4 with Luke 24:45 – 47:

1Co 15:3 For among the first things I passed on to you was what I also received, namely this: the Messiah died for our sins, in accordance with what the Tanakh says;

1Co 15:4 and he was buried; and he was raised on the third day, in accordance with what the Tanakh says;

Luk 24:45 Then he opened their minds, so that they could understand the Tanakh,

Luk 24:46 telling them, "Here is what it says: the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day;

Luk 24:47 and in his name repentance leading to forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed to people from all nations, starting with Yerushalayim.

Thus leading to the initial evidence of Yeshua's resurrection – 1 Corinthians 15:5 – 11:

1Co 15:5 and he was seen by Kefa, then by the Twelve;

1Co 15:6 and afterwards he was seen by more than five hundred brothers at one time, the majority of whom are still alive, though some have died.

1Co 15:7 Later he was seen by Ya`akov, then by all the emissaries;

1Co 15:8 and last of all he was seen by me, even though I was born at the wrong time.

1Co 15:9 For I am the least of all the emissaries, unfit to be called an emissary, because I persecuted the Messianic Community of God.

1Co 15:10 But by God's grace I am what I am, and his grace towards me was not in vain; on the contrary, I have worked harder than all of them, although it was not I but the grace of God with me.

1Co 15:11 Anyhow, whether I or they, this is what we proclaim, and this is what you believed.

The first validation of the Resurrection of Yeshua was eyewitness testimony. A rational person who is skeptical of Yeshua's resurrection needs compelling evidence that Yeshua actually fulfilled this aspect of the *Tanakh's* prophetic description of the Messiah. In providing this evidence, Sha'ul speaks to one of the oldest philosophical questions about religion-can the content of faith be "proved"? His answer falls somewhere between a medieval theologian's "proof of the existence of God" and the existentialist's call for a "leap of faith."

Sha'ul does not assert that his data compel belief; but he does try to reduce the required "leap" to a tiny step which, instead of being in opposition to the rational and the objective, logically follows and builds upon them. In other words, Sha'ul is systematically laying out the case for the Resurrection.

In these verses Sha'ul is implicitly challenging his readers to offer a better explanation for the observed phenomena than Yeshua's being the promised Messiah who rose from the dead.

Addressing disbelief - 1 Corinthians 15: 12 – 19:

1Co 15:12 But if it has been proclaimed that the Messiah has been raised from the dead, how is it that some of you are saying there is no such thing as a resurrection of the dead?

1Co 15:13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then the Messiah has not been raised;

1Co 15:14 and if the Messiah has not been raised, then what we have proclaimed is in vain; also your trust is in vain;

1Co 15:15 furthermore, we are shown up as false witnesses for God in having testified that God raised up the Messiah, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.

1Co 15:16 For if the dead are not raised, then the Messiah has not been raised either;

1Co 15:17 and if the Messiah has not been raised, your trust is useless, and you are still in your sins.

1Co 15:18 Also, if this is the case, those who died in union with the Messiah are lost.

1Co 15:19 If it is only for this life that we have put our hope in the Messiah, we are more pitiable than anyone.

After providing significant and profound eyewitness evidence, Sha'ul addresses those who do not believe in the Resurrection. The Tzedukim (Sadducee) were but one group in Y'hudah that did not believe in the Resurrection, thus it was not a stretch whereby others outside Y'hudah would also not believe in the Resurrection. Sha'ul raises the argument that if there is no Resurrection, then there is no Messiah. Thus if there is no resurrection then none of these can be true. Therefore, Sha'ul is proving their rational position to be erroneous. A strong Rabbinic tactic of questioning a position in order to disprove it altogether. Concluding this passage with the only rational resolution...

1Co 15:20 But the fact is that the Messiah has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have died.

Comparing Adam to Yeshua – 1 Corinthians 15:21 – 22:

1Co 15:21 For since death came through a man, also the resurrection of the dead has come through a man.

1Co 15:22 For just as in connection with Adam all die, so in connection with the Messiah all will be made alive.

Ever since death entered the world through man, resurrection must also come through man, for which Sha'ul establishes Yeshua as the “Second Adam” He offers a further comparison in Romans 5:12 – 21.

Sha'ul emphasizes the importance of the resurrection in relation to the message of the Gospel. For if there is no death, then there is no need for resurrection. Thus Sha'ul establishes a connection with the fall in the garden and Yeshua.

In relation to the previous two verses – Each in its own order – 1 Corinthians 15:23 – 24:

1Co 15:23 But each in his own order: the Messiah is the firstfruits; then those who belong to the Messiah, at the time of his coming;

1Co 15:24 then the culmination, when he hands over the Kingdom to God the Father, after having put an end to every rulership, yes, to every authority and power.

Sha'ul reveals of events that are to transpire in relation to the Resurrection for which Death as the last enemy is dealt with in the concluding verses of this chapter. (15:50-57)

All Authority Established in Yeshua - 1 Corinthians 15:27 – 28:

1Co 15:27 for "He put everything in subjection under his feet." But when it says that "everything" has been subjected, obviously the word does not include God, who is himself the one subjecting everything to the Messiah.

1Co 15:28 Now when everything has been subjected to the Son, then he will subject himself to God, who subjected everything to him; so that God may be everything in everyone.

These verses give specifics of the period spoken of in the Tanakh at [Zec 14:9](#) ("Adonai will be king over all the earth; on that day Adonai will be One and his name One") and [Dan 7:14](#), referring to the Messiah ("His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away").

Reality of the Resurrection - 1 Corinthians 15:29 – 34:

1Co 15:29 Were it otherwise, what would the people accomplish who are immersed on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not actually raised, why are people immersed for them?

1Co 15:30 For that matter, we ourselves—why do we keep facing danger hour by hour?

1Co 15:31 Brothers, by the right to be proud which the Messiah Yeshua our Lord gives me, I solemnly tell you that I die every day.

1Co 15:32 If my fighting with "wild beasts" in Ephesus was done merely on a human basis, what do I gain by it? If dead people are not raised, we might as well live by the saying, "Let's eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"

1Co 15:33 Don't be fooled. "Bad company ruins good character."

1Co 15:34 Come to your senses! Live righteously and stop sinning! There are some people who lack knowledge of God—I say this to your shame.

Why, as believers do we endure all things for the promise that comes through Yeshua's resurrection if this were not true to begin with. Sha'ul concludes that we might as well "live it up" and do what ever we please.

The Facts Pertaining to the Resurrection - 1 Corinthians 15:35 – 49:

Having proved the necessity of resurrection, Sha'ul can now discuss his readers' concerns pertaining to the practical details of this foundational aspect pertaining to the Gospel, The Resurrection.

1Co 15:35 But someone will ask, "In what manner are the dead raised? What sort of body do they have?"

1Co 15:36 Stupid! When you sow a seed, it doesn't come alive unless it first dies.

1Co 15:37 Also, what you sow is not the body that will be, but a bare seed of, say, wheat or something else;

1Co 15:38 but God gives it the body he intended for it; and to each kind of seed he gives its own body.

1Co 15:39 Not all living matter is the same living matter; on the contrary, there is one kind for human beings, another kind of living matter for animals, another for birds and another for fish.

1Co 15:40 Further, there are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies; but the beauty of heavenly bodies is one thing, while the beauty of earthly bodies is something else.

1Co 15:41 The sun has one kind of beauty, the moon another, the stars yet another; indeed, each star has its own individual kind of beauty.

1Co 15:42 So it is with the resurrection of the dead. When the body is "sown," it decays; when it is raised, it cannot decay.

1Co 15:43 When sown, it is without dignity; when raised, it will be beautiful. When sown, it is weak; when raised, it will be strong.

1Co 15:44 When sown, it is an ordinary human body; when raised, it will be a body controlled by the Spirit. If there is an ordinary human body, there is also a body controlled by the Spirit.

1Co 15:45 In fact, the Tanakh says so: Adam, the first man, became a living human being; but the last "Adam" has become a life-giving Spirit.

1Co 15:46 Note, however, that the body from the Spirit did not come first, but the ordinary human one; the one from the Spirit comes afterwards.

1Co 15:47 The first man is from the earth, made of dust; the second man is from heaven.

1Co 15:48 People born of dust are like the man of dust, and people born from heaven are like the man from heaven;

1Co 15:49 and just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, so also we will bear the image of the man from heaven.

Conclusion:

Verses 50 – 58 does not introduce a new idea or concept but concludes Sha'ul's premise of chapter 15 – In order for there to be a Gospel, the resurrection is integral. You can't have one without the other. Likewise, in that the emphasis dealt with those who were dead, Sha'ul anticipates the potential question “What about people who are still alive, what happens to them, and when are they transformed?”

The secret is not the Rapture but that not all believers will die but will be transformed in a manner that the dead will be transformed.

It is both amazing and concerning that people who read Scripture don't follow the simple rules pertaining to grammar. The Bible is the only book that I am aware of where the rules of grammar are suspended,

- Partial sentences used outside of the context of the sentence they reside within
- Changing subjects within a paragraph or passage.
- A conclusion not being used as a conclusion to the subject for which it resides with and thus bringing the subject to a resolution.

Thus Sha'ul concludes this passage, focusing on the Resurrection with the resurrection of the dead and the transformation that is to occur pertaining to the Resurrection as follows:

1Co 15:50 Let me say this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot share in the Kingdom of God, nor can something that decays share in what does not decay.

1Co 15:51 Look, I will tell you a secret—not all of us will die! But we will all be changed!

1Co 15:52 It will take but a moment, the blink of an eye, at the final shofar. For the shofar will sound, and the dead will be raised to live forever, and we too will be changed.

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1Co 15:56 The sting of death is sin; and sin draws its power from the Torah;

1Co 15:57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Yeshua the Messiah!

1Co 15:58 So, my dear brothers, stand firm and immovable, always doing the Lord's work as vigorously as you can, knowing that united with the Lord your efforts are not in vain.

Concluding that the final enemy – Death, is defeated.

Sha'ul encourages believers to be firm and immovable and thus continuing to be His witness in that they are united with Messiah. Thus, the premise of an early exit is further dismissed here because we are to be diligent, not lax in waiting for an early exit.

We will next be looking at Matthew 24 and how it is perceived in relation to the Rapture and what Yeshua's words actually convey.