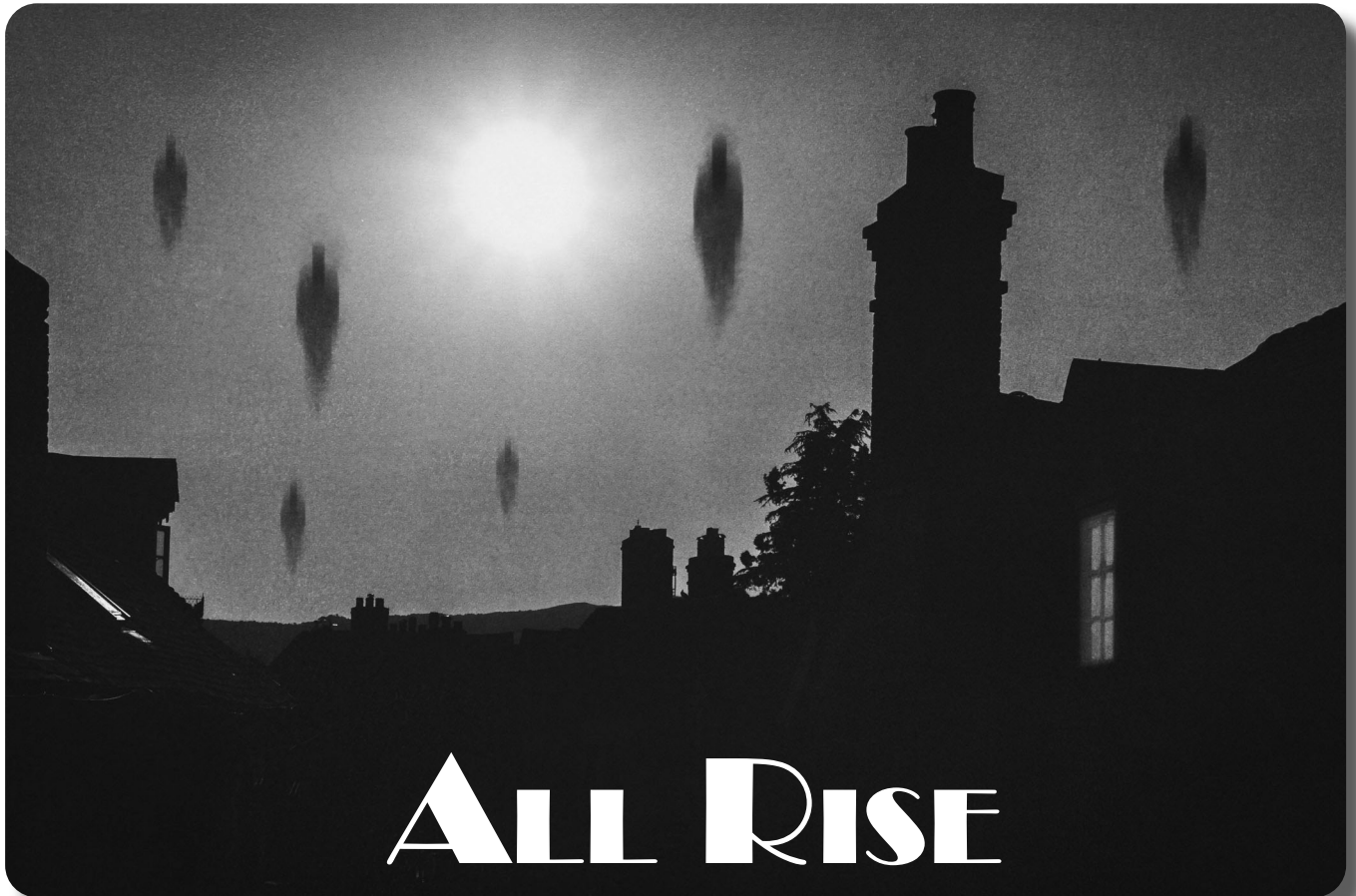


"Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done." Revelation 22:12 NIV



Preparing for the Rapture and Beyond

**A Practical Guide to an
Amazing Future**

M Sanders, MBA, D. Min.



www.BemaBuilders.org

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is taken from the NIV Translation.

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This study is presented from a *Pre-Tribulation, Pre-Millennial, Biblical Literalist* viewpoint – as those are my firm beliefs. I sincerely hope you will go through the study with an open mind and search the Scriptures to see if what I say is true.

The Eleven Chapters are segmented by the time period they focus on. Each person or group should decide the pace of the study and will, therefore, need to determine how much of each chapter to cover during any given week.

ALL RISE:

• LISTEN • OBEY • REJOICE •

Preparing for the Rapture and Beyond

PRELUDE

The Reward Ceremony Imagined - Good News, Bad News and More Good News

⁹ However, as it is written:

*“What no eye has seen,
what no ear has heard,
and what no human mind has conceived”—
the things God has prepared for those who love him—*

1 Corinthians 2:9

Our Rapture journey is complete.¹ It happened so quickly! We’ve arrived in heaven and stand² before our Savior, Jesus, and our Father, God. We are in new glorified bodies³ with eyes that can truly see Him⁴ for the first time - in His majesty and glory. We are in awe and can barely take it in.⁵

All of the holy angels⁶ and the Old Testament Saints (in temporary bodies suited for heaven) are waiting for us there to witness⁷ this never-before event. It is as if they too are holding their breaths in eager anticipation. If we still had our earthly eyes we couldn’t see any of this, not even the sheer number of people and angels present. But somehow, now we can.

Individually we each approach the throne⁸ and look deeply into the eyes of Jesus. It seems as though everyone else fades from view. They are still there and can see one another and us, but for us in that moment, only Jesus matters.

Jesus asks me, “Do you know where you are?”

“Yes sir,” I humbly reply, “this is heaven.”

“Yes, yes it is. Do you know why you are here?”

“You invited me, Sir. You came and got me and brought me here.”

“You are correct. My Father and I invited you.⁹ In fact, I died so you could come here today.¹⁰ And I, myself, came and got you and brought you here.”¹¹

I lower my eyes, “I know” is all I could mumble.

“Do you know what the purpose of today is?” He asks.

“No, sir. I don’t, but it seems really important.”

“It is. It’s very important. Today is the first day of the next phase of My Kingdom. Today I will review the lives of everyone who made the journey with us.”

A bit uneasy I inquire, “Review our lives? Why, Sir? I thought you died for us, so our sins were already paid for.”

“Indeed, that was the purpose of my death. That has already been settled forever. Today is for a different purpose.¹² Today is the day I reveal the rank of authority and responsibility each of you will have in My Kingdom forever. Today exposes how the determination was made.”

He motions His hand toward an elaborate table with a “pile” of something under a beautiful tablecloth that has my name embroidered on it. As we walk toward the table something like a lightning bolt comes out of nowhere and touches the tablecloth. It bursts into flames and disappears. What remains is a pile of ash¹³ covering something underneath.

Jesus slowly and gently reaches into the ash and begins to pick up small nuggets of gold and silver and some precious stones and lays them carefully aside. As He picks up each one, joy floods His face.

*“What are these things, my Lord?” I ask. “Each one represents a righteous act you did for Me, for My Kingdom, while you lived on the earth. This is your life in Me. These are the rewardables. **These are what I was seeking.**”*

As He picks up each nugget both our minds flash to the event it represents. Some I remember, some I don’t. In a matter of seconds everything “good” I ever did comes to my mind represented there in the nuggets. Many of them I didn’t realize were “worth” anything when I did them. Some of them were nothing more than a smile or kind word that seemed somewhat “natural” at the time. A few were when I held someone as they cried. My sincere and earnest prayers for the good of others were there “in full force” as well.¹⁴ I am thrilled beyond measure. The joy in Jesus eyes is almost more than I can bear. “The more you became like Me, the more holiness¹⁵ you grew in to, the more obedience you showed, the more valuable each one became. This filled my Father and Me with great joy.”

In a few minutes, He stops and gazes at me. With trepidation I ask, “What is the ash¹⁶ that is left, what does it represent?” He pauses; a note of sadness covers His face. “It is precious moments in your life that you wasted, filled with thoughts of that world and your life there¹⁷ rather than here and now with Me. It’s all the opportunities¹⁸ I gave you to follow Me, to obey Me, to glorify Me but you chose not to. You chose short-term happiness, comfort and earthly pleasures. You considered yourself over others.¹⁹ Please make no mistake, you chose.

“Some of them are times when you could have gone just a bit out of your way to honor Me through your actions, but you chose to do something you wanted to do instead. Others are times when you did good things, but you sought recognition, honor or praise for yourself – you chose to receive your reward on earth²⁰ rather than waiting for it here. It could have been a nugget, but you chose the recognition and praise of men instead.”

Regrettably, these events are on full display as well. I close my eyes in shame and sorrow.

He quietly adds, “It saddens Me too, mostly for you.”

Preparing for the Rapture and Beyond

He then resumes sifting through the ash to find a few more small jewels and smiles once again. We serve a gracious and generous Savior. As He does, He continues to pluck out even more tiny nuggets and jewels, adding them to the pile He had begun earlier. My eyes widen in amazement and delight at how He can even see these tiny fragments, but He does and He keeps searching.

“Lord,” I say, “I thought You had already picked out everything truly good I ever did! What are these and where do they come from?”

“These, my dear one, are from the rewards others earned that you did some part in helping them. Don’t worry, I didn’t reduce their reward by giving some to you, I have more than enough to go around.” We both smile.

“Some of these are from support and encouragement you gave to My teachers and pastors,²¹ some are simply random acts of kindness²² that My Spirit packaged together with others to draw someone to me. They are second-hand, third-hand, even fourth-hand rewards. All valuable in their own right. I won’t overlook any of the things you did to bring honor and glory to Me²³ and increase My kingdom. I never overlook obedience to my commands²⁴ for they are evidence of your love for Me and My Father.²⁵ I never overlook the times you willfully and joyfully surrendered to My Spirit.”

This is when He says, “Well done good and faithful servant²⁶ ...”

I hope to hear those words. Don’t you?

Please note that while this is fictional (because I have no more first-hand knowledge about the actual event than anyone else), it has Scriptural foundation (see a list of a [few citations](#) below). For me, trying to picture it fills me with joy, excitement and anticipation. I think we are meant to do that, to savor the idea that we could bring joy to our Lord through our lives here and now. It spurs me on to see what I can do to produce more gold, silver and precious jewels and less ash. In the chapters ahead we will attempt to provide some practical suggestions to help in that endeavor.

Verse Citations for REWARDS CEREMONY IMAGINED

1 - 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

2 - 2 Corinthians 5:10

3 - Philippians 3:21, 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 1 John 3:2, 1 Corinthians 15:49

4 - 1 John 3:2

5 - 1 Corinthians 2:9, Revelation 1:17-18

6 - Luke 12:8

7 - Hebrews 12:1-2

8 - 2 Corinthians 5:10

9 - John 3:16, Romans 10:13, 1 Timothy 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9

- 10- Romans 5:8, Romans 4:25, 1 Corinthians 15:3, Hebrews 9:22
- 11- 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17
- 12- 2 Corinthians 5:10, Romans 14:10, 1 Corinthians 3:10-15
- 13- 1 Corinthians 3:10b-15
- 14- Matthew 5:48
- 15- James 5:16, Mark 11:24, Romans 8:26-27, Ephesians 6:18, Jude 20, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, John 15:16
- 16- 1 Corinthians 3:12-15
- 17- Matthew 13:20-22
- 18- James 1:1-4
- 19 - Philippians 2:3-4, Romans 15:1, 1 Corinthians 10:24, Galatians 6:2
- 20- Matthew 6:1-4
- 21- 1 Timothy 5:17-18, Galatians 6:6, Hebrews 13:7, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, Acts 20:35, 2 Corinthians 9:7, Luke 6:38
- 22- Matthew 10:42
- 23- 1 Corinthians 6:20, Romans 11:36, Psalm 115:1, Revelation 4:11
- 24- Mark 12:30-31, John 14:15, 1 John 5:3, John 15:10-15
- 25- 1 John 5:3, John 14:15
- 26- Matthew 25:21, 23, Luke 19:17