

# When Our Change Comes

A Life of Transformation

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Change seems to be the watchword at this time. It was certainly a major element or theme of the latest presidential elections here in the United States as Barak Hussein Obama campaigned on that theme—"change that we can believe in." I wonder if Americans, especially those who voted for him, have begun to regret supporting this nebulous idea of change, and the man behind it all. Maybe. We see the poll numbers showing a great many Americans no longer have the respect for him and his party that they once did.

During the campaign trying to pin down Obama and exactly the kind of changes that he believed in was like trying to nail gelatin to a wall. It was difficult to pin him down on anything. And, now that the public is seeing actually what he believes in, and what he is advocating, and the policies he is enacting, a great deal of buyer's remorse is setting in.

His poll numbers are plunging, going down faster than any other president in history, and the grass roots are rising up, as many of you have seen. (Well maybe you have not since it was not reported in the regular media.) But some of you know and have seen something about the September 12 marches in Washington DC. And, there is even conflicting reports about how many people were there—anywhere from a few thousand (as reported in the mainstream media), to maybe two million (as reported on some conservative blogs on the internet). I saw an analysis yesterday that tried to be scientific about it by seeing which areas of the capital were filled up, and their estimate was at least 250,000.

Regardless, what it shows is that there a lot of people out there who are beginning to disapprove of this "change" foisted on them by Obama's Administration. As a matter of fact, he says that he wants to reform America! But this situation illustrates the painful truth about change. Change is not always for the better.

However, the concept of change is neutral. It can be destructive and unpleasant, or it can be edifying and wonderful. A man named John A. Simone, Sr., once said, "If you're in a bad situation, don't worry, it'll change. If you're in a good situation, don't worry, it'll change."

This is true. It does not matter whether you are in a good or bad situation things are going to change. Things do not ever remain the same for long.

Now, for conservative folks like most of us, this is a hard truth to swallow because the very definition of a conservative person is one who is trying to slow down change. He is trying to conserve a certain way of life, and does not like to see it change. But change happens. And, we have to learn to deal with it.

Now think of this in terms of God's creation. God has imbedded change into the creation. The German dramatist Berkhold Brecht said one time, "Because things are the way that they are, things will not stay the way they are." This is the way that God made things. God made things to break down, and to change. Day changes to night. Spring changes to Summer, and then changes to Fall, and then changes again to Winter, and then changes back to Spring once more.

The weather does nothing but change. There are some places where I have lived where it seems like you go out in the morning with a sweater, but spend the afternoon in shorts and short sleeves, or, vice-versa (depending on what time of year it is). Land erodes; sediments are deposited. Iron rusts. Grass grows, then it withers. Flowers bud, bloom, fade, then fall. Creatures are born, they grow, they mature, they deteriorate, then they die. The only constant is that nothing seems to stay the same!

Everything changes—except God! Of course, we know, from Malachi 3:6 and Hebrews 13:8 that He remains the same; He does not change.

Now, sometimes one's either positive or negative reaction to change is merely a matter of perspective. The change itself is normal, and natural. I mean, how do we normally react to getting older? We could react very negatively, and many of us do. "Argh! My hair is getting gray! It's falling out! I'm getting wrinkles all over my face! Things are bulging in places they should not bulge."

But others seem to take it with a great deal more grace, and they understand the wisdom that is in those gray hairs, and they have a lot of experience invested in those wrinkles to give to others, and they seem to be able to take it so much better than many do.

But change does happen, and we really must think about it as it happens. We have to learn to evaluate change as it is happening. We have to learn to utilize positive change so that we can make something good out of it for ourselves. We have to, at times, embrace wholesale change because change is an integral part of life, like getting older. We have to embrace getting older, or we are going to end up with all kinds of mental and emotional problems.

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And if things are to get better, if we are to become better people, change must occur. A German scientist and satirist, Georg Lichtenberg, said, "I cannot say whether things will get better if we change, but what I can say is that they must change if they are to get better." Since we Christians are in the "betterment business" (a life-long endeavor of ours), change is a priority. We must change.

Please turn to Romans 3 because I want to show you that the Bible backs me up in this in that we must change.

**Romans 3:10-11** As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God.

Now, Acts 3.

**Acts 3:19** "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.

Now, back to Romans 8.

**Romans 8:29** For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Now, did you notice all those "change" words in there? First of all, Paul said that we are all rotten to the core. We are evil. There is none righteous. No not one. Not one of us has tried to seek after God. All we wanted to do was sin, because that is the way that our human nature has taken us. We want to fulfill the desires of the flesh. And Peter then says that we need to repent, which means to turn—it is a change. And you must be converted so that God can bring you the refreshing that you need. And then Paul, again, tells us that God looked down the road of time as it were, and He saw us, and predestined us to be conformed—to be changed—He knew things were not going to go well in the Garden of Eden—He knew from the beginning that people would have to be turned, and changed from their vile humanity, to, as it says, the image of His Son who is pure and righteous, and altogether perfect. So, there has to be a huge conversion process that takes place. We have to be conformed from one thing into another.

But did you notice, here, that in these three verses, the word "change" does not appear.

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In fact, if you go into a Bible program, and type the word "change" into it, it does not come up much, because the word "change" is not in the Bible very often. But, you'd be surprised if you went in there and started picking out all the words in a concordance that mean change in one form or another, or their equivalent phrases.

Repent. Conform (we have seen these two). Transform. Convert (we saw this one too). Grow. Mature. Put on the new man. Become holy. Overcome. Turn. Strive. Be sanctified. And we could go on, and on. All of these, and several more, mean going from one thing to another. Going from one state to another—changing. Christianity, then, is a force for personal change. And ultimately, it will be a force for universal change!

So, what does this Feast of Trumpets—the day that we are observing today—have to do with change? This day is a day of change! It is a great holy day showing us the need for real hope and change. When this day is fulfilled, everything will change (for the better), and so will we! In addition, each time we keep this day, it is a memorial—a reminder—that God has called us to a life of change in preparation for Christ's return!

So, this holy day, in terms of change, has both a present, and a future aspect to it. And I am sure that if we looked hard enough, we could find a past aspect as well. But the Day of Trumpets is all about change.

Let us go back to Leviticus 23. On these holy days I like to go back and touch base once or twice with the command to keep these days.

**Leviticus 23:23-25** Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a Sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.'"

Now, we very frequently talk about this phrase, "a memorial of blowing of trumpets." And we know that it actually literally means, "a remembrance of shouting (of the shofar)," when taken literally. Now, the shout of the shofar is probably what is meant most specifically, and we also know that Numbers 10 lists a very long list of reasons or occasions on which a trumpet is to be blown. God gives us all this information so that we can have a better understanding of what this day is all about. But if you distill all this down, and look at all these reasons why the trumpet is to be blown, you come up with a truth—and that is the trumpet's blast is a signal for change.

Think about it. When a trumpet was blown in the camp of Israel, it announced a change from their semi-permanent settled status as a camp to a nomadic status of people on the march. So, when the trumpet was blown in the wilderness, often that was the signal to pack up, and go wherever the Cloud and Moses would lead them next. Well, this was a change—they were changing where they were. They were changing their status in terms of being settled, or unsettled.

Another trumpet sound signaled the leaders of the tribes and clans were to assemble with Moses to hear whatever it was that needed to be said. So in this case, they went from functioning as individuals in their private dwellings, to being leaders of the commonwealth of Israel, and then they would take what was said, and share it among their people, and put it into practice. They were implementing change.

Another trumpet sound signaled war!

And, they had a trumpet sound for the changing of the month at every new moon. And, as they would have done last night, they would have blown the shofar to signal a change from an ordinary day, and ordinary new moon, to a feast day. It was also blown to declare a change of leadership and coronations.

The trumpet blasts—the shout of the shofar—as seen here is a jarring, resonating call to some sort of change.

Now I have also mentioned in the past Day of Trumpets sermons that the Day of Trumpets is also what I call a keystone holy day. There are seven holy days, and this one is in the middle. There are three before it, and there are three after it. And it sits there at the top holding them together like a keystone in the arch would. We could also say, if we use a slightly different metaphor, it is the fulcrum on which God's plan balances, because you have history on one hand, and you have the future on the other. And everything balances right there at the fulcrum.

Or, if you want to use a different metaphor, you could call it the axis on which things turn, like the axle in a car for your wheels. And that is the Feast of Trumpets. It is the center point that others move around. Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Pentecost mark historic events. We could turn in our Bibles and show where these things have already occurred. And we tell you that in Acts 2, the Holy Spirit came and fulfilled Pentecost. But, you must also think about the future in terms of the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles, and the Last Great Day. Those things are certainly still in the future. If we try to find something in the Day of Atonement in the Bible, we find it in Revelation 20 in the future.

But then there is the Feast of Trumpets. When is that fulfilled? For us, it is still future (for now). But, without the Day of Trumpets happening, none of the remainder can be fulfilled. Unless Trumpets is fulfilled by the return of Jesus Christ, and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on the earth, these other things could not take place. Once the Feast of Trumpets is fulfilled, though, everything changes. Once Christ comes back to this earth and sets up His Kingdom, then He could put away Satan (Day of Atonement) and remove his influence from the earth. Then, the Millennium can take place. And of course, following that comes the fulfillment of the Last Great Day, and the Great White Throne Judgment can occur. But, the Day of Trumpets—the Feast of Trumpets—is the hinge for those things.

Let us see this a bit closer to get the impact that the return of Christ has. Turn to Isaiah 11. As we go through this think about the changes that occur. (These are often read at the Feast of Tabernacles.)

**Isaiah 11:1-10** There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. His delight is in the fear of the LORD, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked [obviously the second coming is the theme]. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.

And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious."

Here we see Christ having returned, and human life, not to mention nature itself, is radically altered. Things change when Christ returns. Justice and equity will be the

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norm, not the aberration that it is today. There is no true justice and equity in this world. But when Christ comes back, it will be justice and equity all the time!

Righteousness and faith, it says, will be the rule, not the exception. There is very little righteousness and faith in this world. Christ even asked if there would even be faith on the earth when he comes.

Now, He said all of that in hope, and that there will be, and we will be of the ones displaying it. But there is very little in this world, and only a smidgen in God's people.

The nature of animals will change so that they can live harmoniously together. And this will be matched by a gradual change in human nature too, with the removal of Satan and his influence.

So, ultimately, in time, as things go on, and God's way becomes more prevalent throughout the world, the nations will begin to co-exist with one another in peace.

Finally, the bulk of humanity, as it says there in verse 10, who are all far from God in paganism and other forms of strange religion, and secularism—all humanity will repent and truly seek God. Now that is true hope and change! That is far beyond what Obama promised. And it is far beyond what he has done.

But we have the Word of God that says that these things will come to pass!

However, there is another change that takes place on the day that Christ returns, and that is the change that is personal to each one of us.

**Zechariah 14:1-5, 9** Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south. Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the LORD my God will come, and all the saints with You. . . . And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In

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that day it shall be, "The LOORD is one," and His name one.

So we see this great battle happening at Jerusalem—a great tumult. Jesus Christ returns just at the right time, from heaven, to fight those who are gathered together against Him. And who is with Him? All the saints (verse 5)—His elect—His holy ones.

Now, take that thought with you and turn to Revelation 19. This is a New Testament view of the same occurrence.

**Revelation 19:11-16** Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LOORD OF LOORDS.

Here we have another viewpoint. It is interesting that Zechariah writes it from the viewpoint of earth, whereas John writes of the vision given him as seen from heaven.

Did you notice that Jesus Christ the Messiah was the One most prominently shown in this. But who else was given a place of prominence? The elect. The saints in Revelation 19:14 are called the armies in heaven. Now how could I say that these are the saints? Well, they are clothed in fine linen, white and clean. God had just told us what that was in verse 8, where she was arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

These are not armies of angels at this point. Well, the horses may be angels, or heavenly horses of some sort. But those who ride on them are the ones who performed righteous acts in their human lives, and were given their reward.

But they come out of heaven! They come out of the sky! They come with Christ! This means that this army—these people on these white horses, along with Christ—is not physical beings. They are spirit beings. Something has happened to them to make them



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different—they have changed. God has granted them fine linen, clean and white.

Turn to I Thessalonians 4. (We will read this and then go to I Corinthians 15—they are companion scriptures.)

**I Thessalonians 4:13** But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

Paul says that he wants to give us hope by telling us what is going to happen when Christ returns. And, not only to us who may still be alive, but to those who have died as true Christians.

**I Thessalonians 4:14a** For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again. . .

This is important because this is part of the belief that we have to have, because Jesus died and rose again and was changed. We have to believe that the same thing is going to happen to us. We have already read that in Romans 8:29, where He has predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son. And that means all the way.

So, let us read this with that belief, that faith, that hope.

**I Thessalonians 4:14-18** For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord [with all authority], that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep [dead]. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout [already mentioned above], with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Our future is assured if we continue to believe. So now, turn back to I Corinthians 15, and we will see what Paul had to say about this in what is now known as the resurrection chapter.

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**I Corinthians 15:50** Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.

So it is obviously speaking of a future time when we will be able to inherit God's Kingdom. Right now it is a spiritual kingdom. We are citizens of a kingdom that is still in heaven. But there will come a time when we will be able to inherit it fully. But that is still future.

**I Corinthians 15:51-54** Behold, I tell you a mystery [a very deep truth that only a very few know; God has to reveal it; this is the revelation]: We shall not all sleep [dead], but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

So Paul makes it very clear that at the last trumpet, the voice will call with the shout of an archangel, and those who have died as true Christians will rise from the grave and ascend to meet Christ who is returning from heaven. Those Christians who are still alive at that time will be instantly changed from physical flesh to spirit essence, and they too, then, will rise to meet Christ in the air. All of God's firstfruits after Christ will be glorified at once—at the same time—and made just as immortal and incorruptible as their Savior Jesus Christ is, because He is to marry her; kind must marry their own kind. We have to be like Him.

**I John 3:1-2a** Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God. . .

Right now! Just as we are—physical children of God, even though we do not deserve it; even though we are still rotten, He has cleaned us up, but there is still a lot of dirt to be cleaned out of us; a lot of things, as He said in I John 3:3, that need to be purified. But right now, we are already children of God,

**I John 3:2** Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been

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revealed what we shall be [there are still questions about that], but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Hang on to that! We shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is! You see? Human eyes cannot see God as He is. Those eyes [of ours] must be changed as well. We will see this in a moment. It is very clear that we must be changed, and become of the same substance—whatever that may be, we cannot quantify it, we cannot understand it yet—but we are going to be just like He is already, because we will be able to see Him as He is face to face.

Turn to the book of Job because I want you to see that the saints have known this for centuries. We will start with Job. He is one of the earliest characters of the Bible. We do not know when exactly he lived. There are some who believe that Moses wrote the book of Job, and he was either speaking about an older contemporary, or he was speaking about someone in history whose story had come down to him, and it became included in God's Word. It is hard to know.

But we do know that Job was pre-Moses. Notice, now, what Job said:

**Job 14:14-15** If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes. [speaking to God] You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands.

Job, here in the midst of his affliction had this hope, that if he should die, that he would just wait in the grave for when God would call, and raise him up out of the sleep. And what does he say? "I will answer You." It is a declaration, if you will, that he will be alive and fully aware; that this resurrection will be into real life.

So, this idea of a change, by a resurrection from the dead, was known as far back as the time of Job. Job was willing to endure whatever hard service, as he said, that God was willing to dish out to him, either personally or through Satan, enduring it patiently because he knew and anticipated that God would call him at some point and change him from the vile person that he was to something much, much better—to the point that he would be able to speak to God Himself.

Now the clause here that says, "You shall desire the work of Your hands," is very interesting to me. It suggests not just only God's desire to see—which we think of when

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we hear, "You shall desire the work of Your hands." That God would desire to go to His creation, whatever that was, and to be able to see it again, because it had been dead, and locked in a drawer somewhere, or had been put aside in a lock box (or however you think of it as), and He had not seen it in a long time, so He desired to go open it up, and look to see it again. That is sometimes the idea that English speakers get. Maybe it is not quite yours, but it is mine.

But that is not what it means at all. It means not that God would want to see it again, but rather He would now want to finish it. That is why the wording is, "The work of Your hands." What Job is saying here is that God would desire to finish the creation that He had started. That planting Job in the ground after his death was not the end, but that there was more to his creation at the hands of God. He had to go through that, because all of God's people will have to go through that process of death, even if it is only a split second of a change at the return of Christ, but we all will go through that same process.

Glorification, which Job was talking about, here, through changing us into spirit beings, is that final step in the process of creation. When God raises us up out of that grave, and He changes us, from mortal to immortal, from corruption to incorruption, He is finished with the work of His hands.

And what does He have to show for it? A glorious son or daughter like His own Son, Jesus Christ. That is why He desires to see the work of His hands. He wants to finish it and have a family.

To use a different analogy, what good is it to go out and plant flower seed all around your house, and just leaving them there, and not watching them grow and produce flowers? God is the same way with us. We are His creation on a much grander basis than some silly flowers. He wants to see us "bloom" as it were, and reach our potential. And it will not happen until we are changed—completely, totally, and into the spirit essence just like His Son Jesus Christ.

Please turn to Psalm 17 where David understood this all as well.

**Psalm 17:15** As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.

This is interesting too. David had been talking about people who had kept rising up against him—his enemies—and he was having to fight them off with God's help, and he then says this at the end of this psalm.

Another biblical understatement, "As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness."

Now it is very clear that David understood the concept of resurrection and change, because he said here, "I will awake in Your likeness." Like John, in I John 3:2, he speaks of seeing God; particularly seeing His face. What David means here is that he is referring back to Exodus 33 and 34. Remember all that? That was after the golden calf incident, and Moses was discouraged, because Israel had sinned very badly. And, he asked God, "Please let me see You." And God replied, "Okay. I will hide you in this cleft in the rock, and I will go past you, and you can see Me. But, I will cover you up as I pass by, so that you can only see My backside as I go away from you, because no man can see My face, and live."

No man—no physical human being can see God's face in His glory, and live—so says God.

But David, here, says, "When I awake in righteousness, I'm going to see Your face!"

What is David implying? He is saying that he will be one righteous enough to be granted this wonderful pleasure of being able to see God's face, but also, he is saying that he will be of a substance that can be able to see God's face, and remain alive! So, he is talking about not only a spiritual change in terms of character, but also what we might call a material change from being human to being something a great deal more than human—a spirit being.

David is sure that when he is glorified, he will be righteous enough to look on the face of God in His glory, and able to remain alive, because he has been changed.

Now, this has another possible, very interesting, allusion to creation, then. Remember Job talked about creation as well, that God was finishing a spiritual creation by resurrection. But, some commentators see a parallel between David's imagining the resurrection into God, and God breathing into Adam the breath of life. It is really, really beautiful.

What do you do when you go to sleep? Or die? It does not matter. Most people lie down when they go to sleep. And when we die, they usually lay us out in a casket of some sort. Okay. That was the same position that most believe Adam was in, as far as we know, when God created him. He was lying on the ground, perhaps, after being created out of the dust of the earth.

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What happened then? Well, Jesus Christ, our Creator, knelt down next to Adam, and breathed into His nostrils the breath of life.

Okay, imagine that you are Adam. And this breath comes into you, and your eyes suddenly pop open, with understanding, and what do you see? The face of God, as He is kneeling over you, breathing into your nostrils the breath of life.

David, in this verse, is saying that, "When I rise from the grave, when my eyes open, the first thing I'm going to see as a spirit being is going to be the face of God who has just changed me to immortal." And boy, he sure will be satisfied!

What an understatement to say that he will be satisfied. It is the ultimate in satisfaction. At that point we will each experience total fulfillment in joy—(in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye)—there is our Savior, saying, "Let's go. We have got a war to fight!"

Well maybe He will not say that. Maybe He will say, "I love you." I do not know. He is our husband. Just think about all this. What would He say? I suppose we could come up with a lot of things. But, our first sight will be of Him, waking us to life as a spirit being, as one of the Firstborn, as His wife. It is incredible to think about. And, it has been there in the Scriptures all the time. It is really amazing.

Please turn to Philippians 3. Paul says after the remark of pressing toward the goal of the Kingdom of God, he says,

**Philippians 3:17-4:1** Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.

What Paul does here is he combines an exhortation to follow the righteous examples of other saints who are doing the right things with a comparison to the opposing fates of

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those who pursue carnality; sin on the one hand, and those who pursue the Kingdom of God on the other.

He says though, down in verse 21, essentially the same things that David and John has said; that when we are resurrected, our bodies will be transformed from what we have been now to match the glorious body that Jesus Christ now has after His resurrection—"to transform our lowly body that it may conform to His glorious body according to the working by which He is able to subdue all things to Himself."

Paul is saying, "How can He do this? What would it take for that to happen?" And then Paul answers that with, "Don't worry about that. He's got so much power, and so much energy that He could transform us all at any time with the same power that He is going to use to make sure that everyone and everything will be under Him in time.

There is limitless power there for God to do this. That is what that word "working" means. It is really a dynamic energy—it is a power. But do not worry, He can do it, and bring this all to pass. Your efforts to pursue the Kingdom of God and to follow those good examples will be worth it, and will be rewarded—it will come to pass, so stand fast, he says, because you are dearly beloved.

This idea, here, is to tell us that we are going to be just like Christ. And, this should set us thinking. What was Christ like after His resurrection? What kind of body did He have? How did He function?

Well, we have a few clues. Please turn to Luke 24. I do not want to take a long time with this, but just to rehearse a little bit, we will pick up one little incident when He appeared to His disciples who had just come back from Emmaus, having seen Him, they make their report. And then,

**Luke 24:36-38** Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?"

"Look, I told you all about this. I've been telling you about this for three-and-a-half years. 'I'm going to die, and three days and three nights later I'm going to rise from the grave, and God's plan will move forward.' Why all the doubts? You should have known this before hand."

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**Luke 24:39** "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."

Very interesting. He is referring to a ghost, I guess, as how they would understand it.

**Luke 24:40-41** When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?"

He was trying to settle them down.

**Luke 24:42-43** So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence.

He had other ideas here. He wanted to show them something about His body. Interesting!

So, what has happened here? We are seeing a foreshadowing of what our bodies will be like too, because we are going to be like Him, remember?

He was able to appear on earth as a solid, food-eating body. They were able to touch Him and handle Him, and put their fingers in the holes in His hands and His feet. They were able to hug Him, like Mary did back at the sepulcher. I am sure that they all did at some point. They were able to pass Him things, and He was able to take them and manipulate them. But He was also able, at any time, to pop in, and pop out without having to go through a door. He perhaps could go through a wall, and just appear among them.

So, we have got a body that is neither physical nor fully spiritual. It is strange—different. It is something that we might not have expected. They were expecting a ghost floating through among them, and they could see things behind it. But they did not expect him to be "solid or physical" as He demonstrated to them. I say that in quotes because He was not entirely physical. He was different from humans, and different from how we expect spirits to be too. It is interesting.

So, it is a quasi-physical body, able to perform material functions without any problem, but also able to walk through walls, and become visible or invisible at will—able to go



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places. Now remember, He had just risen from the grave the evening before, and He stuck around for several hours—it does not tell us what he was doing. But from the time that He was raised from the dead, through to the time that the ladies came to the tomb, and discovered it being empty, and that He was able then to tell Mary not to hug Him yet because He had not ascended to the Father, and then throughout the day He had talked to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, and He had appeared to the disciples this one time at least, but He had also ascended to heaven by this time on the wave sheaf day, probably right after the time that He spoke with Mary—nearing the time of the Wave Sheaf Offering later that morning—this body was not only able to do all these physical things, and walk through walls, and appear visible and invisible, but it was also able to travel the distance from the earth to the Great White Throne of God and back as quick as a wink. This is not a "normal" body. It is a very interesting body—I would love to have one, and I hope to have one someday—but, it is a very interesting body, is it not?

Please turn to Acts 1. This was about forty days after the above.

**Acts 1:9** Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

And He was gone! Where did He go? Well, He went to heaven. He went to sit down at the right hand of God in glory. This was a body that was not only able to walk among humanity in terms of the two disciples to and from Emmaus. And, not to be recognized as anything special, and to be able to eat food, and walk through walls, and to be visible or invisible at will. He was also able to be glorified in that body.

What did John say?

**I John 3:2** Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

He said that we do not know what we will be like, but we shall see Him, therefore we shall be like Him! We cannot understand this. It is beyond human comprehension to understand what kind of body this is going to be. He says that. We do not know what we will be, but we are going to be like Him, and He was able to do all these things, and be glorified too.

And we are going to be just like He is!

This head, this brain, this mind is not able to figure it all out, because it is not something that we are familiar with. We do not have the recipe. We do not have the specifications. We just have a few little anecdotes that tell us some of the things we will be able to do with this body. So that is why John wrote it as he did. It is something beyond our ken, as the Scots would say. We just do not know.

Well, let us just back this all up with Hebrews 1, maybe one of the most beautiful passages in the whole Bible.

**Hebrews 1:1-4** God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

Please turn to Revelation 1 and see what John saw in vision the resurrected Jesus Christ.

**Revelation 1:12-16** Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

This same body—incredible that He can appear as a man, with holes in His hands and feet, who looks just like any other man on the road, but then He can appear like this in His glory—His face shining like the sun in its full strength—eyes burning like fire—hair as white as wool like the Ancient of Days. Same body. We do not know what we will be. But we know, that when we see Him, we will be like Him. It is very interesting—the study of the post-resurrection of Christ is fascinating.

However, many (and I think many of us sometimes too) fail to realize that this awesome change has already begun. Do you realize that? Please turn to Ephesians 1. Certainly we are still physical. I do not want to imply anything more than that. But the change has already been begun in us. Not in our physical body, but in our spiritual mind.

**Ephesians 1:7-14** In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who [which] is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

Let me read those last two again:

**Ephesians 1:13-14** In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who [which] is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

Do you understand what Paul is saying here? God had called us; He has forgiven us; He has given us His Word to understand and grow with; and He has promised us an inheritance that we are assured of, but we have not come into yet. That is the meaning of the first part.

Then in verses 13 and 14 (the last part) He tells us that the guarantee of our inheritance, the guarantee that it will be given to us is the Spirit of God given to us when hands were laid upon us at baptism. It is the down payment—God's pledge (in the terms of money) is like earnest money that God puts down that we will come into our inheritance. That is, He will give us eternal life; that we will have glorification; that we will

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reign as kings and priests with Him; and all the other wonderful promises of God. But the Holy Spirit given to us is God's pledge of this whole package.

And you know, when God gives something, He puts it to work. It is not just something that is given for no reason. He expects it to do something. Oh, I should also add that among the things that are among our inheritance—all things. I just mentioned a few of them, but in Revelation 21 it says,

**Revelation 21:7** He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

So, the Holy Spirit given to us changes our minds. And with that is the first step in this wonderful change from human and physical to spiritual and divine. He has already started this process by giving us some of His Spirit to begin changing the workings of our mind, and giving us perfect godly righteous character.

You could say that the indwelling of God's Spirit is the evidence and the precursor of our eventual complete change to spirit. What God is doing by giving us the Holy Spirit is laying the groundwork for the glorification that we will have at Christ's coming. He is setting events into motion, processes into motion so that we will be ready for the change when it comes. Perhaps this is why Paul in Hebrews 6:4-5 says that since we have partaken of the Holy Spirit, we have tasted of the powers of the age to come. The process has already started.

The miraculous power of change has already begun.

Please turn to Romans 12. After Paul remarks becoming a living sacrifice, he says,

**Romans 12:2** And do not be conformed [changed] to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind [where this all takes place], that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

That is what we have to do now. We are using that Holy Spirit that God has given us to come to understand the will of God perfectly, and start putting it all into practice so that our mind is already on His wavelength. He says that we have to renew our minds. This is not a newness in terms of time, but newness in terms of quality. The mind is renewed—that is, it is made new again.

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So, what is happening is that our minds are changing from the Satan-inspired, carnal-nature-driven minds of selfishness and pride, to a clean God-inspired, spirit-driven mind of outgoing concern in holiness. That is why we have, as Job said, this hard toil—because that is what we are trying to do. And, that is the hardest thing to do on this earth—to change your mind.

Did not a very familiar old white-haired man tell us that at one time before? Mr. Hebert W. Armstrong always taught that the hardest thing to do was to change your mind, and admit that you are wrong. And he was not just talking about changing your mind whether you wanted soup or salad. He was talking about changing your mind from carnality to spirituality.

This word here, "transformed," is the Greek, "metamorphoo," the same word that has come down to us in English as "metamorphosis." It means a complete change from the inside out. You go in a worm, you come out a butterfly. That is the change—it is complete and total.

And do you know what? This word can also be translated as "transfigured." It is the same word found in the book of Matthew in the passage of Christ's transfiguration on the mount.

And what did He do? He showed the disciples what He would look like in His glory. And that is what we are shooting for too. But we have to start first here in the mind.

Let us finish, then, in II Corinthians 3.

**II Corinthians 3:18** But we all, with unveiled face [blindness removed by the Spirit of God], beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

That is what is happening now! And it is all looking forward to that time in the resurrection when we will be changed completely to spirit.

This glorification is the wonderful change that this holy day foreshadows for us. It reminds us of the fact that Jesus Christ promised to return and take charge of this world and set it aright, as well as of the fact that we will be raised and changed to help Him in that great work. But it also reminds us that we are all already in the process of changing, of transforming into the very image of God through the conversion of our carnal mind

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into the very mind of Christ.

This is real, wonderful change that we can truly believe in.