

# **Thousand Year Gap for Prophecy in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and 1 Corinthians 15:52 with Chiliasm Church Fathers**

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## **Introduction**

This is also my original research, and I have not seen any other scholar viewing 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and 1 Corinthians 15:52 as two different prophecies found in these quotes:

New King James Version (NKJV)

*“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.”<sup>1</sup>*

New King James Version (NKJV)

*“<sup>50</sup>Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. <sup>51</sup>Behold, I tell you a [m]ystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—<sup>52</sup>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.”<sup>2</sup>*

Notice that I cannot just interpret a 1000 years gap between these two verses by just reading it as it is and neither can I just claim that these two verses refer to the same event by just

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<sup>1</sup> biblehub.com/1\_thessalonians/4-17.htm

<sup>2</sup> biblehub.com/nkjv/1\_corinthians/15.htm

reading it either. So, I will show *Chiliasm* <sup>3</sup> Church Fathers' quotes which seem to consistently imply that these two prophetic events are separated by 1000 years which in turn can indicate that this part of their writing could be preserving what they had learnt from their spiritual leaders before them in regard to the context of prophecy for these set of verses.

## **Justin of Rome**

Let's start with Justin of Rome (c. 100AD - c. 160 AD). Who was he? Justin of Rome or Justin Martyr or Justin of Neapolis, was a great early Christian apologist who is a foremost exponent of the divine word, who influenced virtually all of subsequent Christian philosophy and Catholic theology. He is a Chiliasm Church Father, priest, martyr for Christ and an approved Church Father in the first Lutheran fathers' Book of Concord, and is venerated in the Catholic Church, Eastern Orthodox Church, Oriental Orthodoxy, Anglican Communion and Lutheran Church.

Justin of Rome seems to only know of two public comings of Christ (one in the past and the other in the future which must thus include the context of 1 Thessalonians 4:17 after the "final antichrist or man of apostasy" reveals his true colours and persecutes Christians) with no hint of a "secret" coming of Christ for any 'faithful Christians' to escape earlier with as pre-tribulation rapture believers teach.

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<sup>3</sup> During the first centuries after Christ, various forms of chiliasm (millennialism) were to be found in the Church, both East and West.[6] Premillennialism held by the Early Church is called "historic premillennialism",[7] and it was supported in the early church by Papias,[8] Irenaeus, Justin Martyr,[9] Tertullian,[10] Polycarp,[11] Pseudo-Barnabas,[12] Methodius, Lactantius,[13] Commodianus,[14] Theophilus,[15] Melito,[16] Hippolytus of Rome, Victorinus of Pettau,[17][18] Nepos, Julius Africanus, Tatian[19] and Montanus.[20] However, the premillennial views of Montanus probably affected the later rejection of premillennialism in the Church, as Montanism was seen as a heresy.[19]. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Millennialism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Millennialism) or a better source would be: Catholic Encyclopedia. *Millennium and Millenarianism*. [www.newadvent.org/cathen/10307a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10307a.htm)

“O unreasoning men! understanding not what has been proved by all these passages, that two advents of Christ have been announced: the one, in which He is set forth as suffering, inglorious, dishonoured, and crucified; but the other, in which He shall come from heaven with glory, when the man of apostasy, who speaks strange things against the Most High, shall venture to do unlawful deeds on the earth against us the Christians, who, having learned the true worship of God from the law, and the word which went forth from Jerusalem by means of the apostles of Jesus, have fled for safety to the God of Jacob and God of Israel; and we who were filled with war, and mutual slaughter, and every wickedness, have each through the whole earth changed our warlike weapons — our swords into ploughshares, and our spears into implements of tillage— and we cultivate piety, righteousness, philanthropy, faith, and hope, which we have from the Father Himself through Him who was crucified; <sup>4</sup> ... For the prophets have proclaimed two advents of His: the one, that which is already past, when He came as a dishonoured and suffering Man; but the second, when, according to prophecy, He shall come from heaven with glory, accompanied by His angelic host, when also He shall raise the bodies of all men who have lived, and shall clothe those of the worthy with immortality, and shall send those of the wicked, endued with eternal sensibility, into everlasting fire with the wicked devils. And that these things also have been foretold as yet to be, we will prove.” <sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Justin of Rome. *Dialogue with Trypho*, Chapter 110.  
[www.newadvent.org/fathers/01288.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/01288.htm)

<sup>5</sup> Justin of Rome. *The First Apology*, Chapter 52.  
[www.newadvent.org/fathers/0126.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0126.htm)

Notice that Justin of Rome's second coming of Christ quote above is like a summary and does not disprove the *Chiliasm* prophecy timeline 'when he says the wicked are raised to be judged here' since his other quote from his more famous book details a *1000 year separation* between the first resurrection and second resurrection judgment <sup>6</sup> in his quote next:

"But I and others, who are right-minded Christians on all points, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged, [as] the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare. ... And further, there was a certain man with us, whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, who prophesied, by a revelation that was made to him, that those who believed in our Christ would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem; and that thereafter the general, and, in short, the eternal resurrection and judgment of all men would likewise take place. Just as our Lord also said, 'They shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, but shall be equal to the angels, the children of the God of the resurrection.' Luke 20:35." <sup>7</sup>

Notice that Christians are changed to become like gods during Judgment Day proving that this change from human to angelic as Justin's usage here must match the other Chiliasm Church Fathers which we will quote later as well, right? So 1 Corinthians 15:50 – 52's "*change*" is viewed as this *change* for *Christians* to become "*gods*" in his quote below which happens during the second resurrection timeline when *others* ("the dead" mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15:52) raised to be judged which is seen collectively when compared with his quote earlier too:

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<sup>6</sup> Revelation 20:5, "But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection" (NKJV).

<sup>7</sup> Justin of Rome. *Dialogue with Trypho*. Chapters 80 – 81.  
[www.newadvent.org/fathers/01286.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/01286.htm)

“Listen, sirs, how the Holy Ghost speaks of this people, saying that they are all sons of the Highest; and how this very Christ will be present in their assembly, rendering judgment to all men. The words are spoken by David, and are, according to your version of them, thus: 'God stands in the congregation of gods; He judges among the gods. How long do you judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Judge for the orphan and the poor, and do justice to the humble and needy. Deliver the needy, and save the poor out of the hand of the wicked. They know not, neither have they understood; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth shall be shaken. I said, You are gods, and are all children of the Most High. But you die like men, and fall like one of the princes. Arise, O God! judge the earth, for You shall inherit all nations.' But in the version of the Seventy it is written, 'Behold, you die like men, and fall like one of the princes,' in order to manifest the disobedience of men — I mean of Adam and Eve — and the fall of one of the princes, i.e., of him who was called the serpent, who fell with a great overthrow, because he deceived Eve. But as my discourse is not intended to touch on this point, but to prove to you that the Holy Ghost reproaches men because they were made like God, free from suffering and death, provided that they kept His commandments, and were deemed deserving of the name of His sons, and yet they, becoming like Adam and Eve, work out death for themselves; let the interpretation of the Psalm be held just as you wish, yet thereby it is demonstrated that all men are deemed worthy of becoming gods, and of having power to become sons of the Highest; and shall be each by himself judged and condemned

like Adam and Eve. Now I have proved at length that Christ is called God.”<sup>8</sup>

Justin does not seem to have a direct quote using 1 Thessalonians 4:17 nor using 1 Corinthians 15:50 – 52 so we must infer like this with his other quotes.

## **Irenaeus of Lyons**

Who was he? Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 130 AD - c. 202 AD) is first Doctor of the Church in order of time, Father of Catholic Theology, Chiliasm Church Father, a hearer of Polycarp, who is an Apostolic Father being the disciple of John who wrote the Book of Revelation and an approved Church Father in the first Lutheran Fathers' Book of Concord. He is venerated in the Catholic Church, Eastern Orthodox Church, Oriental Orthodoxy, Anglican Communion and Lutheran Church.

Irenaeus of Lyons' view of 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and 1 Corinthians 15:52 is compared next.

1 Thessalonians 4:17's unique identifying term for *Rapture* namely, *caught up* is stated here to occur just prior to the start of this 1000 years (Millennial) Reign of Christ which is called the *times of the kingdom* in his writing and this occurrence is after the beast persecutes the Church, where the “beast” is the final Antichrist.

“And they shall lay Babylon waste, and burn her with fire, and shall give their kingdom to the beast, and put the Church to flight.<sup>9</sup> ... so far useful and serviceable to the just, as stubble conduces towards the growth of the wheat, and its straw, by means of combustion, serves for working gold. And therefore,

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<sup>8</sup> Justin of Rome. *Dialogue with Trypho*. Chapter 124.  
[www.newadvent.org/fathers/01288.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/01288.htm)

<sup>9</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons. *Against Heresies*. Book 5. Chapter 26. Point 1.  
[www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103526.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103526.htm)

when in the end the Church shall be suddenly caught up from this, it is said, there shall be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning, neither shall be. Matthew 24:21 For this is the last contest of the righteous, in which, when they overcome, they are crowned with incorruption.”<sup>10</sup>

Observe that some believers claim that Christ's *Secret Coming* is in the *clouds* which signifies pre-tribulation rapture while Christ's Coming with his feet touching the Mount of Olives is considered *Public Second Coming*. However, Irenaeus' quote next contradicts this since he uses Christ's Coming in the *clouds* phrase to refer to only one *Public Second Coming* after the last Antichrist.

“But when this Antichrist shall have devastated all things in this world, he will reign for three years and six months, and sit in the temple at Jerusalem; and then the Lord will come from heaven in the clouds, in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him into the lake of fire; but bringing in for the righteous the times of the kingdom, that is, the rest, the hallowed seventh day; and restoring to Abraham the promised inheritance, in which kingdom the Lord declared, that many coming from the east and from the west should sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Matthew 8:11”<sup>11</sup>

In fact, Irenaeus of Lyons clearly writes that there are only two advents of Christ namely, the first which is *past* and the “second” in the *future* and so 1 Thessalonians 4:17 must be in this time for him since he does not mention any *Secret Coming*

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<sup>10</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons. *Against Heresies*. Book 5. Chapter 29. Point 1. [www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103529.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103529.htm)

<sup>11</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons. *Against Heresies*. Book 5. Chapter 30. [www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103530.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103530.htm)

*of Christ* as pre-tribulation believers teach (to attach 1 Thess 4:17 to it):

“and do not recognise the advent of Christ, which He accomplished for the salvation of men, nor are willing to understand that all the prophets announced His two advents: the one, indeed, in which He became a man subject to stripes, and knowing what it is to bear infirmity, Isaiah 53:3 and sat upon the foal of an ass, Zechariah 9:9 and was a stone rejected by the builders, and was led as a sheep to the slaughter, Isaiah 53:7 and by the stretching forth of His hands destroyed Amalek; Exodus 17:11 while He gathered from the ends of the earth into His Father's fold the children who were scattered abroad, Isaiah 11:12 and remembered His own dead ones who had formerly fallen asleep, and came down to them that He might deliver them: but the second in which He will come on the clouds, Daniel 7:13 bringing on the day which burns as a furnace, Malachi 4:1 and smiting the earth with the word of His mouth, Isaiah 11:4 and slaying the impious with the breath of His lips, and having a fan in His hands, and cleansing His floor, and gathering the wheat indeed into His barn, but burning the chaff with unquenchable fire. Matthew 3:12; Luke 3:17”<sup>12</sup>

1 Corinthians 15:52's *change* from human to no more flesh and blood or *gods* occurs at the end of this 1000 years, i.e. *after the times of the kingdom* or *last trumpet* when *all the remaining dead* in the tombs are judged which is not for First Resurrection context:

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<sup>12</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons. *Against Heresies*. Book 4. Chapter 33. Point 1.  
[www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103433.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103433.htm)



“And in the Apocalypse John saw this new [Jerusalem] descending upon the new earth. Revelation 21:2 For after the times of the kingdom, he says, I saw a great white throne, and Him who sat upon it, from whose face the earth fled away, and the heavens; ... Revelation 20:11 And he sets forth, too, the things connected with the general resurrection and the judgment, mentioning the dead, great and small.”<sup>13</sup>

“1. Let our opponents — that is, they who speak against their own salvation— inform us [as to this point] ... that His words concerning its [future] resurrection may also be believed; so also at the end, when the Lord utters His voice by the last trumpet, 1 Corinthians 15:52 the dead shall be raised, as He Himself declares: The hour shall come, in which all the dead which are in the tombs shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and shall come forth; those that have done good to the resurrection of life, and those that have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. John 5:28”<sup>14</sup>

Please notice carefully how Irenaeus of Lyons quotes the context for 1 Corinthians 15:52’s “the dead” and “last trumpet” (an exact phrase found only in this Bible verse) to refer to the *Second Resurrection* timeline which is seen when combined with his other quote here describing this timeline with the phrases *after the times of the kingdom* and *General Resurrection and Judgment*. Notice that no judgment of any wicked occurs during the *First Resurrection* timeline as Justin’s quote earlier also agrees likewise.

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<sup>13</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons. *Against Heresies*. Book 5. Chapter 35.  
[www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103535.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103535.htm)

<sup>14</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons. *Against Heresies*. Book 5. Chapter 13.  
[www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103513.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103513.htm)

Another fascinating point to note is that there seems to be a “second badge of righteous” saved during the *Second Resurrection* since Irenaeus links this to Christ’s John 5:28 for a literal reading where this “second badge of righteous” saved rise simultaneously with the wicked which also agrees with Judgment Day verses of Matthew 25:31 – 46 where Christ only separates these “sheep” from goats on that Day as they rise mingled up according to these verses if literally read. This is what I call as *Non-Elect Salvation* possibility for this “*sheep of other fold*” since their salvation occurs 1000 years later from the Elect Sheep (if this way of interpreting is true).

This *change* from human to angelic is “gods” even in “*theosis* concept” in Orthodox theology or “*Divinization* concept” in general Christian theology. Irenaeus of Lyons writes regarding the Bride or Church as follows as he quotes the same Psalm 82’s prophecy context in a similar way as Justin of Rome as shown earlier.

“For we cast blame upon Him, because we have not been made gods from the beginning, but at first merely men, then at length gods; although God has adopted this course out of His pure benevolence, that no one may impute to Him invidiousness or grudgingness. He declares, I have said, You are gods; and you are all sons of the HigheBut since we could not sustain the power of divinity, He adds, But you shall die like men, setting forth both truths — the kindness of His free gift, and our weakness, and also that we were possessed of power over ourselves. For after His great kindness He graciously conferred good [upon us], and made men like to Himself, [that is] in their own power; while at the same time by His prescience He knew the infirmity of human beings, and the consequences which would flow from it; but through [His] love and [His] power, He shall overcome the substance of created nature. For it was necessary, at first, that nature should be exhibited;

then, after that, that what was mortal should be conquered and swallowed up by immortality, and the corruptible by incorruptibility, and that man should be made after the image and likeness of God, having received the knowledge of good and evil.”<sup>15</sup>

In his quote next, Irenaeus of Lyons uses the phrase *translated into the kingdom of heaven* when these are *inherited by the Spirit* which matches the *Chiliasm* Prophecy for 1 Corinthians 15:52’s “change in the twinkling of an eye prophecy” from sinless human (natural body) to “no more flesh and blood” into “*celestial* (heavenly) spiritual body”<sup>16</sup> and perhaps that’s why Revelation 21:9 describes the “Bride” descending from Heaven having been “translated” there at this time<sup>17</sup>.

“For a living person inherits the goods of the deceased; and it is one thing to inherit, another to be inherited. ... What, therefore, is it that lives? The Spirit of God, doubtless. What, again, are the possessions of the deceased? The various parts of the man, surely, which rot in the earth. But these are inherited by the Spirit when they are translated into the kingdom of heaven. For this cause, too, did Christ die, that the Gospel covenant being manifested and known to the whole world, might in the first place set free His slaves; and then afterwards, as I have already shown, might constitute them heirs of His property, when the

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<sup>15</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons. *Against Heresies*. Book 4. Chapter 38.  
[www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103438.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103438.htm)

<sup>16</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:40 – 42, “40There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. 41There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. 42So also is the resurrection of the dead” (NKJV).

<sup>17</sup> Revelation 21:9 – 10, “Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife ... and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God” (NKJV).

Spirit possesses them by inheritance. For he who lives inherits, but the flesh is inherited. In order that we may not lose life by losing that Spirit which possesses us, the apostle, exhorting us to the communion of the Spirit, has said, according to reason, in those words already quoted, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Just as if he were to say, Do not err; for unless the Word of God dwell with, and the Spirit of the Father be in you, and if you shall live frivolously and carelessly as if you were this only, viz., mere flesh and blood, you cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”<sup>18</sup>

## **Tertullian**

Who was he? Tertullian (c. 155 AD – c. 240 AD) is a Chiliasm Church Father who is honoured as the Father of Latin Christianity and is regarded as the Founder of Western Theological Scholarship for his immense writing and influence toward the Christianity in the Western world.

Note: For me, the earliest surviving writings of Christianity which mainly involves these Chiliasm church fathers, Irenaeus of Lyons, Justin of Rome and Tertullian seems to preserve the ancient faith most accurately and where they differ, these could be possibilities but I prefer Irenaeus of Lyons and Justin of Rome over Tertullian since even the Roman Catholics have noticed some errors in Tertullian such as Montanism and so he is not sainted.

Firstly, Tertullian also only seems to know of two comings of Christ (one is past and the other is a future public second coming in all glory) as follows:

“Chapter 21. ... For two comings of Christ having been revealed to us: a first, which has been fulfilled

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<sup>18</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons. *Against Heresies*. Book 5. Chapter 9.  
[www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103509.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103509.htm)

in the lowliness of a human lot; a second, which impends over the world, now near its close, in all the majesty of Deity unveiled; and, by misunderstanding the first, they have concluded that the second — which, as matter of more manifest prediction, they set their hopes on — is the only one.”<sup>19</sup>

Tertullian understands that 1 Thessalonians 4:17 refers to post-tribulation rapture at the start of the 1000 years Millennial Reign timeline after the time of the final antichrist (“beast”):

“Now the privilege of this favour awaits those who shall at the coming of the Lord be found in the flesh, and who shall, owing to the oppressions of the time of Antichrist, deserve by an instantaneous death, which is accomplished by a sudden change, to become qualified to join the rising saints; as he writes to the Thessalonians: “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we too shall ourselves be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” [75577557 1 Thess. iv. 15–17]”<sup>20</sup>

Tertullian views 1 Corinthians 15:52’s change from “sinless human body” to “no more flesh and blood” clearly at end of 1000 years and has the clearest description below:

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<sup>19</sup> Tertullian. *Apology*. Chapter 21.  
[www.newadvent.org/fathers/0301.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0301.htm)

<sup>20</sup> Tertullian. *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*. Chapter 41.  
[www.newadvent.org/fathers/0316.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0316.htm)

“Of the heavenly kingdom this is the process. After its thousand years are over, within which period is completed the resurrection of the saints, who rise sooner or later according to their deserts there will ensue the destruction of the world and the conflagration of all things at the judgment: we shall then be changed in a moment into the substance of angels, even by the investiture of an incorruptible nature, and so be removed to that kingdom in heaven <sup>21</sup> ... But the resurrection is one thing, and the kingdom is another. The resurrection is first, and afterwards the kingdom. We say, therefore, that the flesh rises again, but that when changed it obtains the kingdom. ... and we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye ... in order, indeed, that it may be rendered a fit substance for the kingdom of God. “For we shall be like the angels.” This will be the perfect change of our flesh—only after its resurrection. ... Having then become something else by its change, it will obtain the kingdom of God, no longer the (old) flesh and blood, but the body which God shall have given it. Rightly then does the apostle declare, “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God;” for this (honour) does he ascribe to the changed condition which ensues on the resurrection.” <sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Tertullian. *Against Marcion*. Book 3, Chapter 25.  
[www.newadvent.org/fathers/03123.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/03123.htm)

<sup>22</sup> Tertullian. *Against Marcion*. Book 5, Chapter 10.  
[www.newadvent.org/fathers/03125.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/03125.htm)

## Victorinus of Pettau

Who was he? Victorinus is a Chiliasm Church Father who was Bishop of Pettau and did the First and Oldest known Christian verse by verse Commentary on the Apocalypse of John or Book of Revelation. He died a martyr for Christ (c. 303 AD).

Victorinus also clearly writes that 1 Thessalonians 4:17 refers to the rapture when Christ Returns during the First Resurrection at start of 1000 years while the context of prophecy for 1 Corinthians 15:52's "change" refers to a glory for Christians at the end of this 1000 years Millennial Reign of Christ when the Second Resurrection occurs for the rest:

"2 At this same first resurrection ... dead in Christ will stand first, then we who are living, as we will be taken up with Him in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and thus we will always be with the Lord [1 Thessalonians 4:17]. A We have heard the trumpet spoken of; it is observed that in another place the Apostle names another trumpet. Therefore he says to the Corinthians: At the last trumpet, the dead will rise, will become immortal, and we will be changed. B He says the dead will be raised immortal for bearing punishments, but it is shown that we are to be changed and to be covered in glory. [1 Corinthians 15:52] Therefore where we hear "the last trumpet," we must understand also a first, for these are two resurrections. Therefore, however many were not previously to rise in the first resurrection and to reign with Christ over the world [Revelation 20:4 – 6], over all nations, will rise at the last trumpet, after the thousand years, that is, in the last resurrection, among the impious and sinners and perpetrators of various kinds [Revelation 20:11 – 15]." <sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Victorinus of Pettau. *Commentary on the Apocalypse*. Circa 2nd half of the third century. Revelation Chapter 20's Commentary (Page 18).

## Methodius of Olympus

Who was he? Methodius (died c. 311 AD) is a Chiliasm Church Father who was Bishop of Olympus first and then of Tyre. Not much details regarding his life is known. He was a martyr for Christ during the Diocletianic persecution. Only a small part of his numerous writing survives. The 'Banquet of the Ten Virgins' praises virginity. His treatise 'On the Resurrection' also survives where he confronted some of Origen's thoughts. It is said that his work on Free Will is a defence of human liberty against the fatalism of the Gnostics.

Methodius of Olympus believes that 1 Thessalonians 4:17 is "Rapture" at start of the 1000 years when the "Festival of the First Resurrection" begins.

*"VII. [Now the passage, The dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive, Methodius thus explains]: Those are our bodies; for the souls are we ourselves, who, rising, resume that which is dead from the earth; so that being caught up with them to meet the Lord, we may gloriously celebrate the splendid festival of the resurrection, because we have received our everlasting tabernacles, which shall no longer die nor be dissolved."* <sup>24</sup>

Methodius of Olympus believes that 1 Corinthians 15:52's "Change" is at end of the 1000 years when the "Festival of the First Resurrection" ends and Second Resurrection begins and this "Change" is from "sinless human body" to "Angelic" or *something heavenly* <sup>25</sup>.

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[earlychurchrevival.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/st-victorinus-of-poetovio-translated-by-kevin-edgecomb.pdf](http://earlychurchrevival.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/st-victorinus-of-poetovio-translated-by-kevin-edgecomb.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Methodius of Olympus. *From the Discourse on the Resurrection*. Part 3. [www.newadvent.org/fathers/0625.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0625.htm)

<sup>25</sup> Luke 20:34 – 36, <sup>34</sup>Jesus answered and said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. <sup>35</sup>But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither



“For I also, taking my journey, and going forth from the Egypt of this life, came first to the resurrection, which is the true Feast of the Tabernacles, and there having set up my tabernacle, adorned with the fruits of virtue, on the first day of the resurrection, which is the day of judgment, celebrate with Christ the millennium of rest, which is called the seventh day, even the true Sabbath. Then again from thence I, a follower of Jesus, who has entered into the heavens, Hebrews 4:14 as they also, after the rest of the Feast of Tabernacles, came into the land of promise, come into the heavens, not continuing to remain in tabernacles — that is, my body not remaining as it was before, but, after the space of a thousand years, changed from a human and corruptible form into angelic size and beauty, where at last we virgins, when the festival of the resurrection is consummated, shall pass from the wonderful place of the tabernacle to greater and better things,”<sup>26</sup>

Interestingly, Justin of Rome (Justin Martyr) is attested to have written that the “flesh indeed dies” in the context of “kingdom of heaven” which can mean he is referring to the “change” from “human” to “no more flesh and blood” for those who will “inherit heaven”<sup>27</sup> and since this was quoted by Methodius of Olympus

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marry nor are given in marriage; 36nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.” (NKJV). [biblehub.com/nkjv/luke/20.htm](http://biblehub.com/nkjv/luke/20.htm)

<sup>26</sup> Methodius of Olympus. *Banquet of the Ten Virgins*. Discourse 9. Chapter 5. [www.newadvent.org/fathers/062309.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/062309.htm)

<sup>27</sup> Justin of Rome is also known as Justin of Neapolis and here’s an example quote regarding his reliability from ancient times itself, “And Justin of Neapolis, a man who was not far separated from the apostles either in age or excellence, says that that which is mortal is inherited, but that which is immortal inherits; and that the flesh indeed dies, but the kingdom of heaven lives.— From Methodius On the Resurrection, in Photius.” (Fragments of Justin Martyr, Fragment 5) [www.newadvent.org/fathers/0132.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0132.htm) or here (Methodius of Olympus, Part 3, *From the Discourse on the Resurrection*, II. A Synopsis of Some Apostolic Words from the Same Discourse, point VI): [www.newadvent.org/fathers/0625.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0625.htm)

who described this part vividly earlier, it raises the question whether this quote was a rephrase from one of Justin of Rome's lost writings.

Why do Christians need to be in Sinless Human Resurrection Body for 1000 years first before the Change into something Heavenly and no more (old) flesh and blood?

Notice that Christians need to be resurrected for 1000 years in a sinless human body first before the change to no more human to be repaid (recompense) or rewarded in it as both Irenaeus of Lyons and Tertullian give this same reasoning as follows:

“1. Inasmuch, therefore, as the opinions of certain [orthodox persons] are derived from heretical discourses, they are both ignorant of God's dispensations, and of the mystery of the resurrection of the just, and of the [earthly] kingdom which is the commencement of incorruption, by means of which kingdom those who shall be worthy are accustomed gradually to partake of the divine nature (*capere Deum*); and it is necessary to tell them respecting those things, that it behooves the righteous first to receive the promise of the inheritance which God promised to the fathers, and to reign in it, when they rise again to behold God in this creation which is renovated, and that the judgment should take place afterwards. For it is just that in that very creation in which they toiled or were afflicted, being proved in every way by suffering, they should receive the reward of their suffering; and that in the creation in which they were slain because of their love to God, in that they should be revived again; and that in the creation in which they endured servitude, in that they should reign. For God is rich in all things, and all things are His. It is fitting, therefore, that the creation itself, being restored to its primeval condition, should without restraint be under the

dominion of the righteous; and the apostle has made this plain in the Epistle to the Romans.”<sup>28</sup>

“Chapter 25. ... We say that this city has been provided by God for receiving the saints on their resurrection, and refreshing them with the abundance of all really spiritual blessings, as a recompense for those which in the world we have either despised or lost; since it is both just and God-worthy that His servants should have their joy in the place where they have also suffered affliction for His name's sake. Of the heavenly kingdom this is the process. After its thousand years are over, within which period is completed the resurrection of the saints, who rise sooner or later according to their deserts there will ensue the destruction of the world and the conflagration of all things at the judgment: ... when Abraham's seed, after the primal promise of being like the sand of the sea for multitude, is destined likewise to an equality with the stars of heaven — are not these the indications both of an earthly and a heavenly dispensation?”<sup>29</sup>

Notice and compare that this is what both Justin of Rome and Irenaeus of Lyons understood as the meaning of “body, soul and spirit”<sup>30</sup> below where “flesh” is considered as referring to “body” too where all three makes a complete “man”:

“They do not take this fact into consideration, that there are three things out of which, as I have shown, the complete man is composed —flesh, soul, and

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<sup>28</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons. *Against Heresies*. Book 5. Chapter 32.  
[www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103532.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103532.htm)

<sup>29</sup> Tertullian, *Against Marcion*. Book 3. Chapter 25.  
[www.newadvent.org/fathers/03123.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/03123.htm)

<sup>30</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:23 reads, “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (NKJV).

spirit. One of these does indeed preserve and fashion [the man]—this is the spirit; while as to another it is united and formed—that is the flesh; then [comes] that which is between these two—that is the soul, which sometimes indeed, when it follows the spirit, is raised up by it, but sometimes it sympathizes with the flesh, and falls into carnal lusts.”<sup>31</sup>

“For the body is the house of the soul; and the soul the house of the spirit. These three, in all those who cherish a sincere hope and unquestioning faith in God, will be saved.”<sup>32</sup>

## Conclusion

Why are all these important? Doctrinal accuracy shines in higher heavens level compared to lower stars level for converting many with lesser accuracy as Daniel 12:3 prophesies<sup>33</sup> and "*Testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*" (Revelation 19:10, NKJV)<sup>34</sup> so having wrong or inaccurate prophecy may affect "wrong/inaccurate testimony" and thus all other 'theological work' may not be as important even if right (since "double honour" applies to 'more accurate word/doctrine' (implied) in 1 Timothy 5:17<sup>35</sup>).

Here are some helpful comments to understand that the *1000 years in Chiliasm is literally meant*.

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<sup>31</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons. *Against Heresies*. Book 5. Chapter 9.  
[www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103509.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103509.htm)

<sup>32</sup> Justin of Rome. *On the Resurrection*. Chapter 10. The body saved, and will therefore rise. [www.newadvent.org/fathers/0131.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0131.htm)

<sup>33</sup> Daniel 12:3, “Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever” (NKJV). [biblehub.com/daniel/12-3.htm](http://biblehub.com/daniel/12-3.htm)

<sup>34</sup> Source: [biblehub.com/revelation/19-10.htm](http://biblehub.com/revelation/19-10.htm)

<sup>35</sup> 1 Timothy 5:17, “Let the **elders** who rule well be counted worthy of **double honor**, especially those who labor in the **word** and **doctrine** (NKJV).”  
[biblehub.com/1\\_timothy/5-17.htm](http://biblehub.com/1_timothy/5-17.htm)

1) Let's take the example of Tertullian (section 1.3). He wrote that

- a. There are two comings of Christ.
- b. The Second Coming of Christ is directly linked to 1 Thessalonians 4.
- c. After the thousand years, we will be changed from no more flesh and blood into something angelic (Tertullian quotes from 1 Corinthians 15 for this).

Here are further comments to help understand these:

The 2nd and 3rd quotations of his above are from different books. That's not an issue at all since he clearly explains first that "*after the thousand years are over*", only then he applies the 1 Cor. verse while he applies the 1 Thess. verse to the coming of Christ just after the last Antichrist which is at start of millennium. So, the 1000 years gap is proven as I don't see a speculation here since the gap is literally written in his quotes here and seen when combined.

Tertullian doesn't say during his 1 Thess. quote that we go to heaven but rather that we meet the Lord in the air. Even if we go to that heaven, it's still the current old heavens which is different from the final heavens and final new earth (Revelation 21:1 <sup>36</sup>) and for that the 1 Cor. Change from "human" (flesh and blood) to "angelic" (no more flesh and blood) is needed.

Why do we need to resurrect as humans for 1000 years? Tertullian explains that the "earthly dispensation" is "sinless human body" for 1000 years to be repaid for all non-sinful delights regarding the things of this current old earth where some rise later since they were less faithful, i.e. according to

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<sup>36</sup> Revelation 21:1, "Now I saw a **new heaven** and a **new earth**, for the **first heaven** and the **first earth** had **passed away**. Also there was **no more sea**. (NKJV)." [biblehub.com/revelation/21-1.htm](http://biblehub.com/revelation/21-1.htm)

their deserts (Tertullian and Irenaeus' quote explaining this earthly delight reason is stated in Section 1.6).

After that, we are changed into *no more flesh and blood* to enter the final heavens when the 1000 years are over where the current old earth and current heavens are gone at this time too. A difference between the current (first) old earth and current (first) heavens and the final new earth and final new heavens is that the former existed under the sin-period while the latter exists untouched by sin anywhere as this reason is given by Irenaeus as follows:

“But when this [present] fashion [of things] passes away, and man has been renewed, and flourishes in an incorruptible state, so as to preclude the possibility of becoming old, [then] there shall be the new heaven and the new earth, in which the new man shall remain [continually], always holding fresh converse with God. And since (or, that) these things shall ever continue without end, Isaiah declares, For as the new heavens and the new earth which I do make, continue in my sight, says the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. Isaiah 66:22 And as the presbyters say, Then those who are deemed worthy of an abode in heaven shall go there, others shall enjoy the delights of paradise, and others shall possess the splendour of the city; for everywhere the Saviour shall be seen according as they who see Him shall be worthy.”<sup>37</sup>

Victorinus and Methodius also explain the same process in detail meaning that the big picture is likely true. Difference in details only proves that someone's breakdown can be wrong or all right, if it can be harmonized.

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<sup>37</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons. *Against Heresies*. Book 5. Chapter 36. Point 1.  
[www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103536.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103536.htm)

Claiming the Holy Spirit did not intend the literal 1000 years is very dangerous and speculative as that is done primarily by the Roman Catholic Church and Orthodox who also pray to Virgin Mary etc. all claiming the Holy Spirit let these to be dominant in the church for centuries thereafter which doesn't prove it right from a Protestant standpoint.

Modern theologians are still carrying on the Roman Catholic and Orthodox views because they were not exposed to these writings which I present here. With new evidence, perhaps they can see that a literal 1000 years is *possibly* meant after the Return of Christ as these *Chiliasm* Church Fathers' quotes all prove.

These are important for many reasons.

Firstly, to say that the Holy Spirit allowed say Tertullian or any Chiliasm Church Fathers to err based on writings quoted is just an open argument which can also point back to us implying He can allow any modern denominations to err on its interpretations for these verses likewise. So, instead of pointing fingers, I try to present possibilities and interpolations based on assuming if these quotes are preserved true. So, whether it is true or not, I am just honestly presenting the evidence that I find here.

I read the primary sources directly first and compare it with known interpretations say against Chiliasm which always starts with the same opening line namely, "... *we cannot assume the 1000 years is literal* ...". This is problematic for me since the earliest Church Fathers all found it literal till Origen and Eusebius tried to look at it allegorically.

The Catholic Church got influenced by Augustine who also chose Origen's path where this "allegorical view of the 1000 years" made the 'problems disappear' (sort of) since now with allegory, anything can be claimed and contradictions become harder to form.

For example, when the Catholic Church existed more than 1000 years and 2000 years etc., they need to affirm that their continual presence is proof that they are the true Church doing the Great Commission continually etc. so a literal 1000 years cannot be applied to the earth now and admitting an error here can likewise make their other doctrines questionable and so, this literal approach is ignored. You must understand that the Catholic Church generally *assumes* that the 1000 years is happening now allegorically.

God would not have needed to state a literal 1000 years in number (say Revelation 20:5) if it was going to be an allegory. In fact, allegorical words with no definite numbers such as "day" or "hour" would have fit best if the exact "numerical" time was not intended. So, the case for a literal 1000 years seems more probable to me based on such logical arguments too.

Daniel 12:3 <sup>38</sup> contains a prophecy regarding having more accurate doctrines ("insights", "wisdom") referring to even "double honour" for those who labour in word more accurately (implied too) in 1 Timothy 5:17 <sup>39</sup> which in turn, can mean shining in higher heavens level glory in final resurrection bodies as Church Fathers have noted too (example Jerome <sup>40</sup>) as

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<sup>38</sup> Daniel 12:2 – 3, 10, translated based on the Masoretic text reads, “2And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever. ... 10Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.” (NKJV). [biblehub.com/nkjv/daniel/12.htm](http://biblehub.com/nkjv/daniel/12.htm)

<sup>39</sup> 1 Timothy 5:17, “Let the **elders** who rule well be counted worthy of **double honor**, especially those who labor in the **word** and **doctrine** (NKJV).” [biblehub.com/1\\_timothy/5-17.htm](http://biblehub.com/1_timothy/5-17.htm)

<sup>40</sup> Jerome of the Vulgate writes, “But the teachers shall resemble the very heavens, and those who have instructed others shall be compared to the brightness of the stars. For it is not enough to know wisdom unless one also instructs others; and the tongue of instruction which remains silent and edifies no one else can receive no reward for labor accomplished. This passage is expressed by Theodo-tion and the Vulgate edition [of the Septuagint] in the following | 147 fashion: "And those who understand shall shine forth like the radiance of the firmament, and many of the



opposed to rugged godliness of converting many into less accurate righteousness (in theory & practice, or even prophecy). I am not saying I got it or am more accurate but I try to present evidence based on what I read to aim to share these likewise.

Yes, I pray and seek the LORD just like any other average Christian does while indulging in theology but I do not claim that as God is pointing me to any right direction necessarily since He allows freewill on variations to reward us accordingly to make it fair for all.

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righteous like the stars forever and ever." Many people often ask whether a learned saint and an ordinary saint shall both enjoy the same reward and one and the same dwelling-place in heaven. Well then, the statement is made here, according to Theodotion's rendering, that the learned will resemble the very heavens, whereas the righteous who are without learning are only compared to the brightness of the stars. And so the difference between learned godliness and mere godly rusticity shall be the difference between heaven and the stars" (*Commentary on Daniel*, Chapter 12, translated by Gleason L. Archer, 1958), 15-157, [www.tertullian.org/fathers/jerome\\_daniel\\_02\\_text.htm](http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/jerome_daniel_02_text.htm)

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