

## QUESTION 175

### Rapture

Next we have to consider rapture (*raptus*). And on this topic there are six questions: (1) Is a man's soul carried away toward divine things (*rapiatur ad divina*)? (2) Does rapture belong to the cognitive power or the appetitive power? (3) Did Paul see God's essence in his rapture? (4) Was Paul withdrawn from his senses (*fuert alienatus a sensibus*)? (5) Was Paul's soul totally separated from his body in that state? (6) What did Paul know about this, and what did he not know?

### Article 1

#### Is a man's soul carried away toward divine things?

It seems that a man's soul is not carried away toward divine things (*anima hominis non rapiatur ad divina*):

**Objection 1:** Rapture is defined by some as follows: *The elevation, by the power of a higher nature, from what is in accord with one's nature to what is above one's nature (ab eo quod est secundum naturam, in id quod est supra naturam, vi superioris naturae elevatio)*. But it is in accord with a man's nature to be elevated to divine things; for in *Confessiones* 1 Augustine says, "You have made us, Lord, for Yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in You." Therefore, a man's soul is not 'carried away' toward divine things.

**Objection 2:** In *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 8, Dionysius says, "God's justice is seen in the fact that He gives to each thing according to its mode and dignity." But a man's being elevated above what is in accord with his nature does not pertain to his mode or dignity. Therefore, it seems that a man's mind (*mens*) is not carried away toward divine things.

**Objection 3:** Rapture implies a sort of violence. But as Damascene explains, God does not rule over us by force or through violence. Therefore, a man's mind is not carried away toward divine things.

**But contrary to this:** In 2 Corinthians 12:2 the Apostle says, "I know a man in Christ who was carried away to the third heaven ..." And a Gloss on this says, "'Carried away' (*raptum*), i.e., elevated in a way contrary to his nature."

**I respond:** As has been claimed (obj. 3), rapture implies a sort of violence. Now as *Ethics* 3 explains, "The violent is such that its principle is from the outside, with the thing that suffers the force contributing nothing." But each thing contributes to that toward which it tends in accord with its proper inclination, regardless of whether that inclination is voluntary or natural. And so it must be the case that an individual who is carried away (*rapitur*) by something exterior is carried away to something that is different from that toward which its own inclination tends.

Now there are two ways in which this difference can be thought of: (a) with respect to *the end* of the inclination, as, for instance, if a rock, which is naturally inclined toward being moved downward, were to be thrown upward; and (b) with respect to *the manner* of tending, as, for instance, if a rock were to be thrown downward with more velocity than its natural movement involves.

So, then, a man's soul is said to be carried away toward what lies above his nature, in one way, as regards *the end* of the rapture, e.g., when he is carried away toward punishments—this according to Psalm 49:22 ("Lest He carry you away, and there is no one to deliver you"). In a second way, as regards *the manner* that is connatural to a man, which is to understand truth through things that can be sensed. And so, when he is withdrawn from the apprehension of sensible things, he is said to be 'carried away'—even if he is being elevated to what he is naturally ordered toward. This is so, as long as it is not being done by his own consent (*dum hoc non fiat ex propria intentione*), as happens in the case of sleep, which is in accord with nature and so cannot properly be called rapture.

Now there can be three causes of this sort of withdrawal, no matter what end it is done for: (a) *a corporeal cause*, as is clear in the case of an individual who suffers the withdrawal (*alienatio*) because of

some illness; (b) *the power of demons*, as is clear in the case those who are possessed (*sicut patet in arreptitiis*); and (c) *God's power*. And it is this last way in which we are now talking about rapture, i.e., in the sense that someone is elevated by a godly spirit toward supernatural things while being withdrawn from his senses—this according to Ezechiel 8:3 (“The spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem”).

However, notice that an individual is sometimes said to be ‘rapt’ or ‘carried away’ not only because of his being withdrawn from his senses, but also because of his being withdrawn from what he was attending to, as in the case of someone who unintentionally suffers from a wandering mind. But this is not called rapture in as proper a sense.

**Reply to objection 1:** It is natural for a man to tend toward divine things through the apprehension of sensible things—this according to Romans 1:20 (“The invisible things of God are seen through the things that have been made”). But the *manner* of an individual’s being elevated to divine things when he is withdrawn from the senses is not natural to a man.

**Reply to objection 2:** Because man has been made to the image of God, it pertains to a man’s mode and dignity to be elevated to divine things. And since the divine good infinitely exceeds human power, a man needs to be helped supernatural to attain that good, and this help is effected by a -gift of grace. Hence, it is not contrary to nature, but instead beyond the power of nature, for the mind to be elevated in this way by God through rapture.

**Reply to objection 3:** Damascene’s explanation should be understood to apply to those things that are to be done by a man. However, as regards things that exceed the power of free choice, it is necessary that a man be elevated by a some stronger operation. This operation can in a certain respect be called coercion, viz., if the *manner* of the operation is taken into account—but not if one takes into account the *end* of the operation, toward which the man’s nature and his intention are ordered.

## Article 2

### Does rapture belong more to the appetitive power than to the cognitive power?

It seems that rapture belongs more to the appetitive power than to the cognitive power:

**Objection 1:** In *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 4 Dionysius says, “It is, however, ecstasy (*extasis*) that the divine love brings about.” But love belongs to the appetitive power. Therefore, so does ecstasy, i.e., rapture.

**Objection 2:** In *Dialogus 2* Gregory says, “He who fed the pigs fell *beneath* his very self because of the dissipation that belonged to his mind and to his uncleanness, whereas Peter, whom the angel freed and whose mind he carried away in ecstasy outside itself, was *above* his very self.” But the prodigal son fell into lower things because of his affections. Therefore, those who are carried away to higher things undergo this because of their affections.

**Objection 3:** A Gloss on Psalm 30: (“In you, O Lord, have I hoped, let me not be confounded forever”) says, in its exposition of the title (“Unto the end, a psalm for David, in an ecstasy”), “*Ekstasis* in Greek signifies *excessus mentis* in Latin, a mental departure. There are two ways in which this happens, either by dreading earthly things or by the mind’s being carried away (*mente rapta*) toward higher things and being oblivious to lower things.” But a dread of earthly things pertains to affection. Therefore, the mind’s being carried away to higher things, which is posited as its opposite, likewise pertains to affection.

**But contrary to this:** A Gloss on Psalm 115:2 (“I said in my excess: ‘Every man is a liar’”) says, “The ecstasy spoken of here is not when the mind is withdrawn by dread, but when it is carried aloft by the inspiration of a revelation.” But revelation pertains to the intellective power. Therefore, so does ecstasy, i.e., rapture.

**I respond:** There are two ways in which we can speak of rapture:

(a) First, we can speak of rapture with respect to *that toward which the individual is carried away*. And on this score rapture cannot, properly speaking, belong to the appetitive power but can belong only to the cognitive power. For it has been explained (a. 1) that being carried away lies outside of the proper inclination of that which is carried away. But the movement of an appetitive power is itself an inclination toward a desirable good. Hence, properly speaking, by the very fact that a man desires something, he is not being ‘carried away’ toward it; instead, he moves toward it on his own.

(b) Second, rapture can be thought of with respect to *its cause*. And on this score rapture can have a cause on the part of the appetitive power. For from the very fact that an appetite is strongly attracted to something, it can happen that a man is drawn away from everything else by the violence of the affection (*ex violentia affectus*). Hence, the Apostle likewise said that he was carried away not only “to the third heaven,” but even “into paradise”—and this involves the affections.

**Reply to objection 1:** Rapture adds something over and beyond ecstasy. For ecstasy implies, simply speaking, a departure from oneself in accord with which one is placed outside of his own order (*extasis importat simpliciter excessum a seipso, secundum quem scilicet aliquis extra suam ordinationem ponitur*), whereas rapture adds to this a sort of violence. Therefore, ecstasy can belong to the appetitive power, e.g., when an individual’s appetite tends toward what lies outside himself. And it is in accord with this that Dionysius claims that the divine love brings about ecstasy, viz., insofar as it makes a man’s appetite tend toward the things loved. Hence, he later adds, “Even God Himself, who is a cause of all things, through the overflow of His loving goodness, goes outside of Himself in His providence for everything that exists.”

Also, even if this were being said expressly about rapture, it would mean only that love is *a cause* of rapture.

**Reply to objection 2:** There are two sorts of appetite in a man, viz., (a) *intellective appetite*, which is called *the will*, and (b) *sentient appetite*, which is called *sensuality*. Now it is proper to a man that his lower appetite should be subordinate to his higher appetite, and that his higher appetite should move his lower appetite. Therefore, there are two ways in which a man can be brought outside himself with respect to his appetite:

In one way, when the intellective appetite is tending entirely toward *divine* things and putting aside those things toward which the sentient appetite tends. And on this score Dionysius says in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 4, “By the power of God’s love bringing about an ecstasy, Paul said, ‘I live, it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.’”

In the second way, when, having put aside the higher appetite, a man moves entirely toward things that involve the lower appetite. And on this score “he who fed the pigs fell beneath his very self.” And this departure from oneself, or ecstasy, comes closer to the nature of rapture than the first way. For the higher appetite is more proper to a man, and so when a man is carried away from the movement of the higher appetite by the violence of the lower appetite, he is farther away from what is proper to himself. However, because there is no ‘violence’ here, since the will is able to resist passion, this falls short of the genuine nature of rapture—unless, perhaps, the passion is so strong that it removes the use of reason, as happens in the case of those who go insane because of the strength of their anger or their love.

Nonetheless, notice that both sorts of departure can cause a departure of the cognitive power, either because (a) the mind is carried away toward certain intelligible things when it is separated from the senses or (b) because it is carried away to a vision in the imagination, i.e., to the appearance of images.

**Reply to objection 3:** Just as love is a movement of appetite with respect to something good, so fear is a movement of appetite with respect to something bad. Hence, an ecstasy (*excessus mentis*) can be caused by both in the same way—especially because, as Augustine points out in *De Civitate Dei* 14, fear is caused by love.

### Article 3

#### Did Paul see God's essence in his rapture?

It seems that in his rapture Paul did not see God's essence:

**Objection 1:** Just as we read of Paul that he “was carried away to the third heaven” (2 Corinthians 12:2), so, too, in Acts 10:10 we read of Peter that “an ecstasy of mind (*excessus mentis*) fell over him.” But in his ecstasy (*in suo excessu*) Peter did not see God's essence. Therefore, it seems that Paul did not see God's essence, either.

**Objection 2:** The vision of God renders a man beatified. But in his rapture Paul was not beatified; otherwise, he would never have returned to the misery of the present life, but instead his body would have been glorified by the overflow from his soul, as will happen with the saints after the resurrection. But this clearly did not happen (*patet esse falsum*). Therefore, Paul did not see God's essence in his rapture.

**Objection 3:** As is established in 1 Corinthians 13:8ff., faith and hope cannot exist simultaneously with the vision of God. But in the state in question Paul had faith and hope. Therefore, he did not see God's essence.

**Objection 4:** As Augustine points out in *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 12, certain “likenesses of bodies” (*similitudines corporum*) are seen in accord with a vision in the imagination. But as is clear from 2 Corinthians 12:2-4, in his rapture Paul saw certain likenesses, viz., the third heaven and paradise. Therefore, it seems that he was carried away to a vision in his imagination rather than to the vision of God's essence.

**But contrary to this:** In *De Videndo Deum ad Paulinam* Augustine makes the determination that “God's very substance could have been seen by certain individuals who were still in this life (*in hac vita positus*), e.g., by Moses and by Paul, who, while they were carried away, ‘heard ineffable words that no man is permitted to utter.’”

**I respond:** Some have claimed that in his rapture Paul did not see God's essence itself, but instead saw a certain reflection of its brightness (*quandam refulgentiam claritatis ipsius*).

However, Augustine clearly settles on the contrary position not only in *De Videndo Deum*, but also in *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 12, and it is established in a Gloss on 2 Corinthians 12:2. Moreover, the Apostle's very words likewise signal this. For he says that he “heard ineffable words that no man is permitted to utter.” But things of this sort seem to belong to the vision of the saints, which exceeds the state of the present life—this according to Isaiah 6:4 (“Eye has not seen, O God, outside of you, what you have prepared for those who love you”). And so it seems more correct to say that he saw God through His essence.

**Reply to objection 1:** There are three ways in which the human mind is carried away by God to contemplate divine truth:

In one way, insofar as it contemplates divine truth *through certain likenesses in the imagination*. And this is the sort of ecstasy (*excessus mentis*) that fell upon Peter.

In a second way, insofar as it contemplates divine truth through intelligible effects, and this was the sort of ecstasy that belonged to David when he said, “I said in my ecstasy (*in excessu meo*), ‘Every man is a liar’” (Psalm 115:2).

Third, insofar as it contemplates divine truth in its essence. And this is the sort of rapture that belonged to Paul, as well as to Moses. And this was properly congruent; for just as Moses was the primary teacher of the Jews, so Paul was the primary teacher of the Gentiles.

**Reply to objection 2:** God's essence cannot be seen by a created intellect except through the light of glory (cf. *ST* 1, q. 12), of which Psalm 35:10 says, “In your light we shall see light.” But there are two ways in which an individual can participate in the light of glory: (a) *by way of an immanent form*, and this is what makes the blessed in heaven saints; and (b) *by way of a transient instance of being acted*

upon (*per modum cuiusdam passionis transeuntis*), in the way that has already been explained in the case of the light of prophecy (q. 171, a. 2). And it is in the latter way that this light existed in Paul when he was carried away. And so from this sort of vision he was not beatified absolutely speaking (*non fuit simpliciter beatus*), in the sense of there being an overflow into his body, but instead he was beatified only in a certain respect (*solum secundum quid*). And so it is a rapture of this sort that in some way belongs to prophecy.

**Reply to objection 3:** In his rapture Paul was not beatified *via a habit* (*non fuit beatus habitualiter*), but instead he had only an *act* that belongs to the blessed in heaven (*solum habuit actum beatorum*). It follows that during that interval there was no *act* of faith existing in him at the same time, and yet the *habit* of faith did exist in him at that same time.

**Reply to objection 4:** There is one sense in which as something corporeal can be understood by the name ‘the third heaven’. And in this sense *the third heaven* is the empyrean heaven, which is called the third with respect to *the airy heaven* and *the starry heaven* (*respectu caeli aerei et caeli siderei*). And he is said to have been carried away to the third heaven not because he was carried away to seeing the likeness of some corporeal thing, but because the third heaven is the place of contemplation for the blessed. Hence, a Gloss on 2 Corinthians 12:2 says, “The third heaven is the spiritual heaven, where the angels and saintly souls enjoy the contemplation of God.”

In a second sense, by the name ‘the third heaven’ one can understand some sort of otherworldly vision that can be called ‘third’ in three ways:

In one way, *according to the ordering of cognitive powers*, so that what is called *the first heaven* is a otherworldly corporeal vision that is effected through the senses in the way that the hand was seen writing on the wall in Daniel 5:5, whereas the *second heaven* is a vision in the imagination, e.g., the vision that Isaiah saw in Isaiah 16:1, and the vision that John saw in Apocalypse 4:2ff., while what is called the *third heaven* is, as Augustine explains in *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 12, an intellectual vision.

In a second way, it can be called ‘third’ *according to the ordering of knowable things*, so that what is called the *first heaven* is the cognition of celestial bodies, the *second heaven* is the cognition of celestial spirits, and *the third heaven* is the cognition of God Himself.

In a third way, what can be called *the third heaven* is the contemplation of God *according to the degrees of the cognition by which God is seen*. As a Gloss on 2 Corinthians 12:2 explains, the *first* of these belongs to the angels of the lowest hierarchy, the second to the angels of the middle hierarchy, and the third to the angels of the highest hierarchy. And since the vision of God cannot exist without delight, Paul says not only that he was carried away to the third heaven, by reason of the *contemplation*, but also that he was carried away to paradise, by reason of the consequent delight.

#### Article 4

##### Was Paul in his rapture withdrawn from his senses?

It seems that Paul in his rapture was not withdrawn from his senses (*non fuerit alienatus a sensibus*):

**Objection 1:** In *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 12 Augustine says, “Why should we not believe that God wanted to show to such a great apostle, the teacher of the gentiles, carried off to that most excellent vision, the life which is to be lived for eternity after this life?” But in that future life, after the resurrection, the saints will see God’s essence without any withdrawal being made from their senses. Therefore, neither was a withdrawal of this sort made in the case of Paul.

**Objection 2:** Christ was truly a wayfarer (*viator*), and He continuously enjoyed the vision of the divine essence, and yet no withdrawal from His senses was made. Therefore, it was not necessary for a withdrawal from the senses to be made in the case of Paul in order for him to see God’s essence.

**Objection 3:** After Paul had seen God’s essence, he was mindful of the things that he had seen in that vision; hence, in 2 Corinthians 12:4 he says, “He heard hidden words that no man is permitted to utter.” But as is clear from the Philosopher in *De Memoria et Reminiscentia*, memory belongs to the sentient part [of the soul]. Therefore, it seems that in seeing God’s essence, Paul was not withdrawn from his senses.

**But contrary to this:** In *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 12 Augustine says, “If an individual does not in some sense die, either by leaving his body completely or by being turned away from or withdrawn from his bodily senses, then he is not carried away to that sort of vision.”

**I respond:** God’s essence cannot be seen by a man through any cognitive power other than the intellect. But the human intellect is not turned toward things that can be sensed except by the mediation of images (*nisi mediantibus phantasmatis*), (a) through which one receives intelligible species from the things that can be sensed and (b), taking account of which one makes judgments about things that can be sensed and deals with them. And so in every operation by which our intellect is withdrawn from images, it has to be withdrawn from the senses.

Now in the state of the present life it is necessary for a man’s intellect to be withdrawn from the senses if he is seeing God’s essence. For God’s essence cannot be seen through *any image*; indeed, God’s essence cannot even be seen by means of *any created intelligible species*, since it infinitely exceeds not only all bodies, which images have to do with, but also all intelligible creatures. But when a man’s intellect is elevated to the highest vision of God’s essence, the mind’s entire attention must be directed thereto, so that the mind understands nothing else from images but is instead carried totally toward God. Hence, it is impossible for a man in the state of the present life to see God through His essence without being withdrawn from his senses.

**Reply to objection 1:** As has been explained (a. 3, obj. 2), in the blessed who see God’s essence after the resurrection there will be an overflow from the intellect to the lower powers and all the way to the body. Hence, in accord with the very rule of the vision of God the soul will attend to both images and things that can be sensed.

However, as has been explained (a. 3, reply to obj. 2), this sort of overflow does not occur in those who are carried away. And so the arguments are not parallel.

**Reply to objection 2:** The intellect of Christ’s soul was glorified through a *habitual* light of glory by which He saw the divine essence more fully than any angel or man. He was, however, a wayfarer because of the passibility of His body, in accord with which He “was made a little lower than the angels,” as Hebrews 2:9 puts it—and this by way of an exception (*dispensative*) and not because of any defect on the part of His intellect. Hence, the argument in His case is unlike the argument in the case of other wayfarers.

**Reply to objection 3:** After Paul ceased to see God through His essence, he was mindful of those things that he had come to know in that vision by the mediation of certain intelligible species that were left as habits from the vision in his intellect—just as, likewise, when a sensible thing is absent, certain impressions remain in the soul which one later remembers by turning toward images. This is why he was unable either think of the entire cognition or to express it in words.

## Article 5

### Was Paul’s soul totally separated from his body in that state?

It seems that in that state Paul’s soul was totally separated from his body:

**Objection 1:** In 2 Corinthians 5:6-7 the Apostle says, “As long as we are in the body, we are wandering from the Lord, since we are walking by faith and not by sight (*per speciem*).” But in the state in question Paul was not wandering from the Lord, since, as has been explained (a.3), he was seeing God

by sight (*per speciem*). Therefore, he was not in his body.

**Objection 2:** A power (*potentia*) of the soul cannot be elevated above the essence of the soul, in which it is rooted. But during the rapture the intellect, which is a power of the soul, was withdrawn from bodily things by its elevation to divine contemplation. Therefore, *a fortiori*, the essence of the soul was separated from the body.

**Objection 3:** The powers (*vires*) of the vegetative soul are more material than the powers of the sentient soul. But as has been explained (a. 4), the intellect had to be withdrawn from the powers of the sentient soul in order for it to be carried away toward seeing the divine essence. Therefore, *a fortiori*, it had to be withdrawn from the powers of the vegetative soul. But once the operation of these latter powers ceases, the soul no longer remains connected to the body. Therefore, it seems that in the rapture Paul's soul had to be totally separated from his body.

**But contrary to this:** In his letter *De Videndo Deum ad Paulinam* Augustine says, "It is not unbelievable that this excellence of revelation—viz., seeing God through His essence—should have been granted to certain saints who were not yet deceased to such an extent that all that remained was their corpses for burial." Therefore, it was not necessary for Paul's soul to be totally separated from his body during the rapture.

**I respond:** As was explained above (a. 1), in the case of the sort of rapture that we are now talking about, a man is elevated from what is in accord with his nature to what is above his nature. And so there are two things that have to be considered: (a) what accords with nature for a man and (b) what is done by God's power in a man above his nature.

Now from the fact the soul is united to the body as the body's natural form, the soul's *natural condition* is to have intellectual understanding by turning toward images (*per conversionem ad phantasmata*). This natural condition is not taken away from the soul in the state of rapture, since, as has been explained (aa. 2-3), the soul's status is not changed. However, as long as the soul remains in a state of rapture, what is taken away from it is *actually* turning toward images and things that can be sensed, in order that, as has been explained (a. 4), its elevation to what exceeds all images not be impeded.

And so in the state of rapture the soul did not have to be separated from the body in such a way that it was not united to it as its form; instead, what was necessary was that the soul's intellect should be withdrawn from images and from the perception of sensible things.

**Reply to objection 1:** In his state of rapture Paul was wandering from the Lord as far as his *status* was concerned, since he was still in the state of being a wayfarer, but, as is clear from what was said above (a. 3, *ad obj.* 2-3), he was not wandering from the Lord as regards the *act* by which he was seeing God by sight.

**Reply to objection 2:** A power of the soul is not elevated by *its natural strength* above the mode that is appropriate for its essence. But it can be elevated to something higher by *God's power*, just as a body can, by the violence of a stronger power, be elevated above the place that is appropriate to it by the species of its nature.

**Reply to objection 3:** The powers of the vegetative soul do not operate at the soul's behest like the sentient powers do; instead, they act in the manner of a nature. And so withdrawal from them is not required for the state of rapture, in the way that withdrawal from the sentient powers is required, since the operations of the sentient powers lessen the soul's attentiveness to intellectual cognition.

## Article 6

### Was Paul ignorant of whether his soul was separated from his body?

It seems that Paul was not ignorant of whether his soul was separated from his body:

**Objection 1:** In 2 Corinthians 12:2 he himself says, "I know a man in Christ who was carried away

to the third heaven.” But ‘man’ names something composed of a soul and a body, and, again, rapture differs from death. Therefore, it seems that he knew that his soul had not been separated from his body through death—especially given that this is commonly posited by the Doctors.

**Objection 2:** From the same words of the Apostle it is clear that he knew where he was being carried away to, since he says, “to the third heaven.” But from this it follows that he knew whether or not he was in his body. For if he knew that the third heaven is something corporeal, it follows that he knew that his soul was not separated from his body, since a vision of a corporeal thing can be brought about only through a body. Therefore, it seems that he was not ignorant of whether his soul was separated from his body.

**Objection 3:** In *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 12 Augustine says, “In the rapture he saw God by the vision by which the saints in heaven see Him.” But by the very fact that they see God, the saints know whether their souls are separated from their bodies. Therefore, Paul likewise knew this.

**But contrary to this:** 2 Corinthians 12:2-3 says, “... whether in the body or outside the body, I do not know, God knows.”

**I respond:** The truth about this question has to be taken from the very words of the Apostle by which he says (a) that he knows something, viz., “he was carried away to the third heaven,” and (b) that he is ignorant of something, viz., “whether in the body or outside the body.”

There are two senses in which the latter can be understood:

(a) In *the first sense*, what is said—“whether in the body or outside the body”—does not refer to the very *esse* of the man who was carried away, as if he were ignorant of whether his own soul was in his body or not, but instead refers to the manner of the rapture, so that, more specifically, he is ignorant about whether his body had been simultaneously carried away to the third heaven with his soul or whether instead it was only his soul that had been carried away—in the way that Ezechiel says that he “was led in my visions of God to Jerusalem” (Ezechiel 8:3). In the prologue to *Super Daniel* Jerome—where he says, “... and, lastly, our Apostle ...”—asserts that this was the interpretation of a certain Jew and that, more specifically, the Jew said, “[Paul] did not dare to assert that he was carried away in his body but instead he said, ‘whether in the body or outside the body, I do not know.’”

However, Augustine disproves this interpretation in *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 12 by appealing to the fact that the Apostle says that he knew that he was carried away to the third heaven. Therefore, he knew that it was the genuine third heaven to which he had been carried away and not an imaginary likeness of the third heaven. Otherwise, if ‘the third heaven’ had named an image of the third heaven, then by parity of reasoning he could have said that he had been carried away in his body, where ‘body’ names an image of his proper body of a sort that appears in dreams. By contrast, if he knew that it was truly the third heaven, then either (i) he knew that the third heaven was something spiritual and incorporeal and so such that his body could not have been carried away there, or else (ii) he knew that it was something corporeal and so such that his soul could not be carried away there without his body unless it were separated from his body.

(b) And so one must understand the phrase in question *in the second sense*, viz., that the Apostle knew that he had been carried away with respect to his soul and not with respect to his body, but he did not know how his soul had been related to his body, i.e., he did not know whether or not his soul had been existing without his body.

And on this last point authors speak in different ways.

For instance, some claim that the Apostle knew that his soul had been united to his body as its form, but he did not know whether he had undergone withdrawal from his senses, or even whether a withdrawal had been made from his soul’s vegetative works.

However, by the very fact that he knew that he had been carried away, he could not have been ignorant of the fact that a withdrawal had been made from his senses. On the other hand, the question of whether or not a withdrawal had been made from the soul’s vegetative works was not such an important matter that special mention had to be made of it. What remains is that the Apostle did not know whether



his soul had been conjoined to his body as its form, or whether his soul had been separated from his body through death.

Now some authors, conceding this, claim that (i) the Apostle did not arrive at this conclusion during the time when he was being carried away, since all of his attention was then turned toward God, but that (ii) he perceived it afterwards when he was thinking about what he had seen.

However, this claim runs contrary to the words of the Apostle, who distinguishes the past from the future in his words. For he says in the present that he knows that he was carried away fourteen years ago, and that he does not know in the present whether he was in the body or outside the body.

And so one should reply that he did not know, either before or afterwards, whether his soul had been separated from his body. Hence, in *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 12, after concluding a long investigation, Augustine says, “Thus, it perhaps remains for us to understand that when he had been taken away to the third heaven, he did not know whether (i) his soul was in his body in the way that a soul is in a body when the body is said to be alive—be it the body of a man who is awake or of a man who is sleeping or of a man who is in an ecstasy and withdrawn from his bodily senses—or whether (ii) his soul had completely left his body, so that his body lay dead.”

**Reply to objection 1:** Through synecdoche a part of a man is sometimes called a man, and especially the soul, which is the preeminent part of a man—even if one might think that the individual whom he said was carried away was not a man at the time he was carried away, but was a man fourteen years later. Hence, he says, “I know a man,” and he does not say, “I know a man in a rapture.”

Again, nothing would prevent a divinely procured death from being called a rapture. And as Augustine says in *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 12, “Given that the Apostle is in doubt about this matter, who among us could be certain?” Hence, those who talk about this matter are talking conjecturally rather than with certitude.

**Reply to objection 2:** The Apostle knew either that the third heaven was something incorporeal or that something incorporeal was seen by him in that heaven. Yet this knowledge could have been arrived at through his intellect even if his soul were not separated from his body.

**Reply to objection 3:** The vision of Paul in his rapture was in some respect similar to the vision of the blessed in heaven, viz., with respect to *what* he saw, and it was in some respect dissimilar, viz., with respect to the *manner of the seeing*, since he did not see perfectly in the way that the saints who are in heaven see. Hence, in *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 12 Augustine says, “When the Apostle was carried away from his bodily senses into the third heaven, what was lacking in comparison to the full and perfect cognition of things that is in the angels was that he did not know whether he was in the body or outside the body. This will surely not be lacking when, once our bodies have been received in the resurrection of the dead, this corruptible being will put on incorruption.”