

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

- We are going to continue our study on the doctrine of the Rapture of the Church.
- And asking the question:
 - Are You Ready?
 - Are You Ready for the Rapture of the church?

- **What is the doctrine of the Rapture:**



- 1) The doctrine of the rapture is a belief held by some Christians that states believers in Jesus Christ will be taken up to heaven, either before or during a time of tribulation on Earth.



- 2) It is based on interpretations of biblical passages, including 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-52, which describe a sudden gathering of believers in the air to meet Christ.




- 3) The rapture will be a supernatural event where believers will be transformed and physically caught up to be with Christ, while those left behind will experience a period of turmoil and suffering on Earth.



- 4) The timing and specifics of the rapture vary among different interpretations and theological perspectives.

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- If Jesus came to get His church today, right now,
 - Would you be ready?

- **What does it mean to be ready?** 
 - **1) Acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior:**



- To be ready for the rapture of the church, individuals must have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, accepting Him as their Lord and Savior.
- This involves confessing and repenting of their sins, seeking forgiveness, and surrendering their lives to Him.

- **Romans 10:9 (NKJV)**

9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

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○ 2) Living a holy and righteous life:



- Being ready for the rapture means living a life that aligns with God's Word and His commandments.
- It involves striving for holiness, avoiding sinful behavior, and pursuing righteousness with the help of the Holy Spirit.

- **1 Peter 1:15–16 (NKJV)**

15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”

○ 3) Watchfulness and readiness:



- Being ready for the rapture involves living with a sense of readiness, watching for signs and eagerly anticipating Christ's return.
- It means being aware of the times we are living in, being spiritually awake, and not being caught off guard.

- **Matthew 24:44 (NKJV)**

44 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

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○ 4) Sharing the Gospel:



- To be ready for the rapture, believers are called to fulfill the Great Commission by sharing the good news of salvation with others.
- This involves actively participating in God's work of reconciling people to Himself and making disciples of all nations.

● Matthew 28:19–20 (NKJV)

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

● What does it mean to be ready?



- 1) Acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior
- 2) Living a holy and righteous life
- 3) Watchfulness and readiness
- 4) Sharing the Gospel

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• Last week we looked at 5 major points about the Rapture:

- 1) The Hope of the Rapture Is from The Lord (15)
- 2) The Rapture Is the Return of Jesus Christ (16)
- 3) The Rapture Is a Reunion with Believers Who Have Died (16)
- 4) The Rapture Is the Removal of The Church (17)
- 5) The Rapture Is the Reassurance of Our Blessed Hope (18)



- Last week we looked at the authority of this doctrine is found in vs15.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

- Let's read our text again,
 - And we'll unpack it.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

The Comfort of Christ's Coming

- 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.
- 14** For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.
- 15** For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.
- 16** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.
- 17** 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.
- 18** Therefore comfort one another with these words.

- 1) The Hope of the Rapture Is from The Lord (15)
- Last week we saw that:
 - The Rapture is for the church.
 - It is a purpose for the believer.

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- **The Rapture is described as a mystery.**
- I personally find that interesting.
 - Because the **coming** of the Messiah is not a mystery.
 - That's the hope of the entire Old Testament
- So why is the Rapture a mystery?
 - **1 Corinthians 15** is a chapter devoted to the subject of the Resurrection.
 - The resurrection of Jesus
 - And the resurrection of all believers
- The kind of bodies we're going to have,
 - Is described in this passage.
- Let's look at:

- **1 Corinthians 15:51-52 (NKJV)**

51 Behold, I tell you a **mystery**: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—

52 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.

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- Now the Greek word for “**mystery**” means:
 - Being outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension, can be made known only by divine revelation, and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God, and to those only who are illumined by His Spirit. In the ordinary sense a “mystery” implies knowledge withheld; its Scriptural significance is truth revealed.
- The mystery is not something that’s tricky to understand.
 - It’s something that no one knew about!
- Now what is being said that’s new about the return of Christ?
 - What is the mystery here?
- It’s not that people are going to die,
 - And be resurrected
 - Every Jew who read his Bible knew about that.
- The mystery being revealed is,
 - There are going to be people who will NOT die.
 - **1 Corinthians 15:51 (NKJV)**
51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.

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- Every last one of us,
 - Whether we die or are raptured...
 - We are gonna get a new physical body.

- Now some of you,
 - Are pretty pleased with what you got now.

- Give it time,
 - You'll be happy about this fact as you get older.

- If the rapture happened right now,
 - Jesus would look at you say,
 - NO WAY, you need a new bod.

- The mystery is,
 - You'll get a new body at the time of the rapture.
 - It's gonna be great.

- As we look at 1 Thessalonians 4:16...

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

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- Looking at our 5 major points:



- 1) The Hope of the Rapture Is from The Lord (15)
- **2) The Rapture Is the Return of Jesus Christ (16)**

- The Rapture is the Return of Jesus Christ Himself
- Now I've never seen Him,
 - But I look for Him to return
- I've never touched Him,
 - But I can't wait to hug Him
- I've never physically met Him,
 - But He's, my friend.

- **John 15:15 (NKJV)**

15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.

- I've never physically talked with Him,
 - Yet I've given my entire life to Him,
 - And I talk to Him all the time.

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- Everything I've found out about Jesus,
 - Makes Him the most wonderful person I've ever known.
- And for all of us who feel that...
 - We look forward to meeting Him for the first time.
- How do we know it's Jesus coming?

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

- Now the word here for **Lord** is the word “**kurios**” in Greek.
 - Refers to authority.
 - And in this context,
 - Authority of earth and heaven.
- JW's and other cults,
 - Will say that shows that Jesus isn't God.
 - And that both God and Jesus return
- But in the Old Testament,
 - Every time God is referred to as LORD in Hebrew,
 - It's all caps

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- Guess what word is used when the Old Testament was translated into Greek...“**kurios**” ...every time
- So to say, ...“**kurios**” ...
 - Doesn't refer to God is not true.
- Also, in Titus 2 it says...

- **Titus 2:13-14 (NKJV)**
 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God ***and*** Savior Jesus Christ,
 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.
- The cultists will say,
 - See: “there, they both return”
- But they have a big problem here
- We see here that the word “***and***” connects:
 - God and Savior...
 - Two nouns

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- What we don't see in English,
 - That is in the Greek,...
 - Is that the **definite** article “the”
 - Is before the first noun “God,”
 - And not before the second noun “Savior”

- We see this in the KJV of this passage:

- **Titus 2:13 (KJV)**
13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

- There's a rule of Greek grammar called,
 - **The Granville Sharp rule.**
 - This rule states that if “and” connects two nouns, and the definite article “the” is in front of the first noun and not the second noun...**it connects equals**
- There are 256 usages of that in the NT,
 - And there are NO exceptions!
- That's why it's called a 'rule of Greek grammar'



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- In other words,
 - Jesus Christ IS the great God and Savior,
 - They are one in the same person.
- So at the time of the rapture,
 - Who is coming for the church?
- Look at Titus again:

- **Titus 2:13 (KJV)**
 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of **the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;**

- There is so much here in verse 16:

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven *with a shout*, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

- Now when we read this in English,
 - We think it's talking about a loud noise,
 - Someone shouting.
- But this is not talking about a loud noise.

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- This Greek word means:
 - To command, to summon.
- It means to order something to be done.
- This is speaking of His sovereign authority
- So when Jesus returns,
 - He's going to give a **command**.
- At which time,
 - Every believer who's ever died,
 - Will instantly be resurrected,
 - Changed,
 - And meet Him in the air.
- **And** those still living at that time,
 - Will also come to Him.

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- Back to our verse:

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, *with the voice of an archangel*, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

- A lot of people wonder,
 - How many archangels are there?
- It's very simple...
 - The Bible says there's only one
- This is Michael, the archangel,
 - The leader of God's angels

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- Angels are important in God's plan,
 - They are called ministering spirits,
 - **Hebrews 1:14 (NKJV)**
14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?
 - They help take care of us.
 - **Psalms 91:11 (NKJV)**
11 For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways.
- **Verse 16**, is talking about Jesus giving orders to all the angels,
 - All the holy angels will be with Jesus.
 - A Royal Escort!

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- In verse 16, we also see the **Deity of the One who comes**.

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and *with the trumpet of God*. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

- According to Revelation,
 - The **trumpet of God** is speaking about God's voice,
 - The Almighty One:

▪ **Revelation 1:10–11 (NKJV)**

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet,

11 saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

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- **Verse 16, also takes us to our 3rd major point:**



- 1) The Hope of the Rapture Is from The Lord (15)
- 2) The Rapture Is the Return of Jesus Christ (16)
- **3) The Rapture Is a Reunion with Believers Who Have Died (16)**

- **“...the dead IN CHRIST will rise first...”**

- It is referring to “church age” believers who have died.
- All the believers from all the ages,
 - Are not going to be resurrected at the Rapture.
 - Only church age believers
- This is why we don’t sorrow as those without hope.
- Because we will see our loved ones IN Christ again,
 - And then it will be permanent!
- It is important to remember that in the New Testament,
 - **“sleep”** applies only to the body,
 - Never the soul

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- Nowhere in the Bible is the soul ever dead...
 - Only the body

- **“Soul sleep”** is a false teaching,
 - That the souls of the dead are in a state of unconscious existence in the afterlife

- There’s no such thing as soul sleep.

- According to the Bible,
 - The soul is described as immortal,
 - Only bodies die.

- **2 Corinthians 5:8 (NKJV)**

8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

- Paul understood this well,
 - And said...

- **Philippians 1:23 (NKJV)**

23 For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.

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- Moses and Elijah's souls weren't sleeping when they appeared to Jesus.
- Remember Jesus told the thief on the cross:

- **Luke 23:43 (NKJV)**

43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

- **Look at vs 14...**

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

- Those who died IN CHRIST,
 - Come back with Jesus,
 - And are given their new body
- And those who are living,
 - Will radically be changed.

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- **In closing:**

- **Transformation Mystery:** 

- Embrace the anticipation of a miraculous transformation at the Rapture, where believers, whether alive or deceased, will receive new bodies.

- **1 Corinthians 15:51–52 (NKJV)**

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed...

- **Personal Return of Jesus:** 

- Live in constant expectation of the imminent return of Jesus Christ Himself, the great God and Savior, fulfilling the blessed hope of believers.

- **Titus 2:13–14 (NKJV)**

looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ...

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- **Joyous Reunion with Believers:**



- Find comfort in the joyous reunion at the Rapture, where church-age believers, both living and deceased, will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air.

- **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (NKJV)**

For the Lord Himself will descend... the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together...

- **Are you ready?**

- If you're not.
- Today's the day!

- **2 Corinthians 6:2 (NKJV)**

2 For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, **now is the day of salvation.**