

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 | Part 3

- We are going to continue our mini-series **“Are You Ready”** from,
 - 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18,
 - And the study of the Rapture of the church.

- The Rapture of the Church,
 - Is a controversial,
 - And often misunderstood topic in the church.

- However,
 - That is no reason to avoid this important doctrine.

- As we continue to explore in this series,
 - It is a crucial part of God's plan for the end times.

- We need to be confident in our faith,
 - And eagerly await the coming of our King,
 - Being faithful,
 - And ready for His return.

- As we come to understand this Biblical truth,
 - We need to hold onto the glorious hope of the rapture.

- We are talking about a promise of our victory,
 - For every believer in Jesus Christ.

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- Over the past 2 weeks, we looked at 3 of the 5 major points about the Rapture:

- 1) The Hope of the Rapture Is from The Lord (15)



- Vs15: “For this we say to you by the word of the Lord”

- 2) The Rapture Is the Return of Jesus Christ (16)



- Vs16: “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven”

- 3) The Rapture Is a Reunion with Believers Who Have Died (16)



- Vs16: “And the dead in Christ will rise first.”

- The last 2 we are going to look at is:...

- 4) The Rapture Is the Removal of The Church (17)



- 5) The Rapture Is the Reassurance of Our Blessed Hope (18)

- So, let's read it...

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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.

- As we look at **vs17** we see our 4th point:



4) The Rapture Is the Removal of The Church (17)

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- Here we see a specific **point in time** when this happens:

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.

- Verse 16 says:
 - The dead IN CHRIST are resurrected,
 - They will “rise first”
- Those alive and remain,
 - Are actually raptured.
- Notice it says “**Then**”
 - This is a specific moment of time.

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- But we also see it called:

- **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.

- **A moment.**

- **The twinkling of an eye.**



- 1. The twinkling of an eye refers to the sudden and instantaneous transformation of believers at the resurrection.




- 2. It signifies the rapid and glorious change that will occur to believers when their mortal bodies are replaced with immortal ones.



- 3. It emphasizes the unexpected and instant nature of this transformation, highlighting that it will happen suddenly and without warning.

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- Will there be time to rethink your belief in Jesus at the time of the rapture?
 - ...NO
 - **Play: "Rapture in Church2.mp4"** 
- The truth is, the return of Jesus imminent,
 - It can happen at any time.
- And the **transformation** will happen when that happens:
 - In a "**moment**" and "**twinkling of an eye**,"
- **This should motivate us to live our lives,**
 - In alignment with God's will,
 - And to spread the Gospel,
 - So that others may experience this transformation and resurrection.
- As we continue with **vs17**

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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.

- Notice that Paul said “**we**”
 - He lived knowing that it could happen in his life.
- This is where we get the doctrine of the,
 - **Imminent return of Christ**
- That He can come at any time
- **Continuing...**

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.

- **caught up** – *harpazo* –



○ To seize, carry off by force; to seize on, claim for one's self eagerly; to snatch out or away.

- We are talking about millions of Christ Followers,
 - Taken by force.

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- We see who is involved in this...

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.

- Those alive at the time of the rapture,
 - And **them**.
 - Who is “**them**”
- Look back at **vs16:**

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. (them)**

- **Them** in v17 =
 - Those who have died during the church age **vs 16**.
- We also see **where** this takes place,
 - “**cloud**”
 - “**in the air**”

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.

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- The “**Rapture**” is very different then the “**Second Coming**”:
- At the “**rapture**” Jesus doesn’t come to the earth,
 - Church saints meet Him in the “**clouds**”, “**in the air**”
- The “**Second Coming**” is:
 - His return at the end of the Tribulation where He “**comes to earth**”.
- The **rapture** and the **second coming** of Christ are often confused with each other.

- They have totally different purposes:

- The **rapture**:

- Is when Jesus Christ returns to remove the church.

- The **second coming**:

- Is when Jesus returns to defeat the Antichrist, destroy evil, and establish His millennial kingdom.



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- For further understanding we will compare some difference:



- 1a) At the **rapture**, believers meet the Lord in the air:

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

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.


- 1b) At the **second coming**, believers return with the Lord to the earth:

- **Revelation 19:14 (NKJV)**

14 And the armies in heaven, **clothed in fine linen**, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.



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- 2a) The **rapture** occurs before the tribulation:

- **1 Thessalonians 5:9 (NKJV)**

9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,


- **Revelation 3:10 (NKJV)**

10 Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

- 2b) The **second coming** occurs after the great and terrible tribulation:

- **Revelation chapters 6–19**

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- 3a) The **rapture** is the removal of believers from the earth as an act of deliverance:

- As we have seen in **1 Thessalonians 4:13-17**,

- **1 Thessalonians 5:9 (NKJV)**

9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

- 3b) The **second coming** includes judgement for unbelievers:

- **Matthew 13:38-42 (NKJV)**

38 The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. 39 The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. 40 Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. 41 The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 42 and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

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- **2 Thessalonians 1:6–9 (NKJV)**

6 since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, 7 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

- **Jude 14–15 (NKJV)**

14 Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, 15 to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

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- 4a) The **rapture** and **transformation** are a **mystery** and **instant**:

- **1 Corinthians 15:50–55 (NLT)**

50 What I am saying, dear brothers and sisters, is that our physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever. 51 But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! 52 It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. 53 For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies. 54 Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: “Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”

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- 4b) The **second coming** will be visible to all:

- **Revelation 1:7 (NKJV)**

7 Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

- **Matthew 24:29-30 (NKJV)**

29 “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

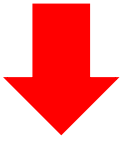
- 5a) The rapture is imminent; it could take place at any moment:

- **Titus 2:13 (NKJV)**

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

- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18;
 - 1 Corinthians 15:50-54).

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- 5b) The second coming of Christ will not occur until after certain other end-times events take place:

- **Matthew 24:15 (NKJV)**

15 “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand),

- This verse references the prophecy given by Daniel.

- **Daniel 9:27 (NLT)**

27 The ruler will make a treaty with the people for a period of one set of seven, but after half this time, he will put an end to the sacrifices and offerings. And as a climax to all his terrible deeds, he will set up a sacrilegious object that causes desecration, until the fate decreed for this defiler is finally poured out on him.”

- This points to a future event that will signal the end times.

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- Jesus warns against false messiahs,
 - Making it clear that His **second coming** will not be hidden.

- **Matthew 24:23 (NKJV)**

23 “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ **do not believe it.**

- All will see it!

- Let’s look at:

- **Matthew 24:27 (NKJV)**

27 For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

- This verse emphasizes the sudden nature of Christ's return,
- Comparing it to the quickness and visibility of lightning.

- **Let’s put this into perspective:**



- The earth circumference is approx. 24,901 miles.
- The speed of light is 186,000 miles per second.
- It would take .13 seconds for light to travel one time around the world.
- That’s faster than the blink of an eye.

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- The **second coming** of Christ is glorious and powerful:

- **Matthew 24:29 (NKJV)**

29 “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

- There is going to be a **cosmic disturbance** that will occur before Christ's return,
 - Indicating a significant event before His **second coming**.

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○ Then we look at:

▪ Matthew 24:30 (NKJV)

30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

- Here we see the **glorious** and **powerful** return of Jesus,
 - Visible to all,
 - Prompting a response of mourning from the people of the earth.

● For further understanding we will compare some difference:




- 1a) At the **rapture**, believers meet the Lord in the air.
- 1b) At the **second coming**, believers return with the Lord to the earth.



- 2a) The **rapture** occurs before the tribulation.
- 2b) The **second coming** occurs after the great and terrible tribulation.

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- 3a) The **rapture** is the removal of believers from the earth as an act of deliverance.
 - 3b) The **second coming** includes judgement for unbelievers.

 - 4a) The **rapture** and **transformation** are a **mystery** and **instant**.
 - 4b) The **second coming** will be visible to all.

 - 5a) The rapture is imminent; it could take place at any moment.
 - 5b) The second coming of Christ will not occur until after certain other end-times events take place.

- **Think of it this way:**

- Jesus has planned a special meeting with you,
 - His church,
 - His bride.

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- **Read vs17 again:**

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.

- Why does He have this appointment with His church?
 - Because He loves you so much.
- And you might be thinking,
 - Yeah, but while I am waiting,
 - I keep messing up.
- He knows what a chump I am,
 - And yet my failures don't change His plan for me.
- He even knows how many times I will mess up:

- **Psalm 56:8 (NKJV)**

8 You number my wanderings; Put my tears into Your bottle; Are they not in Your book?

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- What book:

- **Malachi 3:16-17 (NKJV)**

16 Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard them; So a **book of remembrance** was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name. 17 “They shall be Mine,” says the LORD of hosts, “On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him.”

- He knows everything about you:

- And He calls you His,
 - If you put your trust in Him.

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- Imagine this truth:
 - All of your sorrow,
 - All of your pain,
 - All of your trouble,
 - All of your struggles.
 - Will be over in a moment of time.

- **Revelation 21:4 (NKJV)**

4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

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- And when the Rapture takes place,
 - We see something of great encouragement:

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.**

- We will forever be with Jesus!
- This is our blessed hope,
 - A hope of encouragement!



- 5) The Rapture Is the Reassurance of Our Blessed Hope (18)

18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

- Remember **vs13**:

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 | Part 3

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.

- I want to remove any mental hang-ups or confusion,
 - Someone might have about our future,
 - And the hope that we have.
- This passage is intended to bring encouragement,
 - And to eliminate emotional depression regarding your future.

• We have cover 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)



- When I get bummed out,
 - I just think about Jesus coming for me,
 - And I'm encouraged.

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- All this should move us to action:
 - It may happen 100 years from now,
 - It may happen today.

- May we never turn away from our walk with Christ,
 - And follow Him more than ever.

- It is a sure thing,
 - Jesus is coming for His church!