

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 | How Many Resurrections Are There?

Introduction:

- In the past few weeks,
 - We've been studying the **"doctrine,"**
 - Of the **"rapture."**

- The **"rapture"** is a future event for the church.
 - It hasn't happened yet.

- Paul introduces this **"doctrine"** to this young church,
 - In vs17: **"Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up"**

- This is an important **"doctrine"** for the church.


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• Let's read our text again...


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.


- This is a teaching and doctrine,
 - Paul doesn't want to church be **ignorant** of.


- The word "**ignorant**" in vs13 means: 
 - = a willing blindness, to disregard, not recognizing


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- **Look at vs13:** 
 - Not being ignorant of the “rapture”:
 - Restores “hope” of our future.
 - And frees us from “sorrow” of not knowing the future.

- **Look at vs14:** 
 - We see the first **resurrection** of Jesus,
 - We see a **resurrection** of the saints.

- **Look at vs15:** 
 - The rapture and the **resurrection** of the saints,
 - Is “**by the Word of the Lord.**”

- **Look at vs16:** 
 - The **rapture** and the **resurrection**, ...
 - Is the return of Jesus Christ:
 - “**for the Lord Himself will descend from heaven**”

- **Look at vs17:** 
 - The **rapture** is the removal of the church.

- **Look at vs18:** 
 - What we read from **vs13-17 (“therefore”)**,
 - Is to bring us comfort,
 - **And** we are to use these words to encourage each other.


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- As I mentioned,
 - This portion of scripture doesn't only speak of the **rapture** of the church.
 - It also speaks of the **resurrection** of those who have died in Christ.
- I'd like to read it again with the focus being a **"resurrection."**

- 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 (raptured and resurrected)** shall always be with the Lord.

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- The concept of resurrection:
 - In both the Old and New Testaments,
 - Is a complex and multifaceted one.

- This morning,
 - We will be looking at the idea of **resurrection**,
 - Specifically in the context of:
 - **“the righteous and unrighteous.”** 
 - The doctrine of the “resurrection of the righteous and unrighteous teaches that after death, both the righteous and unrighteous will be raised from the dead and face judgment.
 - The righteous being granted eternal life in paradise.
 - The unrighteous facing eternal punishment.

- This doctrine is a core belief of Christianity,
 - And is based on the teachings of Jesus,
 - And the writings of the apostle Paul.

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- Let's look at some New Testament key verses:

- **John 5:28–29 (NKJV)**

28 Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice

29 and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

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

15 I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.

- **1 Corinthians 15:21–22 (NKJV)**

21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

- **1 Corinthians 15:42–44 (NKJV)**

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

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- **Revelation 20:12–13 (NKJV)**

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

- We also see the doctrine of resurrection in the Old Testament:

- **Isaiah 26:19 (NKJV)**

19 Your dead shall live; Together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew is like the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead.

- **Daniel 12:2 (NKJV)**

2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt.

- The resurrection of the dead is, ...
 - The hope of God's ultimate victory over evil.

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- The doctrine of the resurrection falls under the categories of:
 - Eschatology (the study of the end times)
 - And soteriology (the study of salvation).

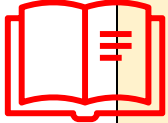
- It is closely related to:
 - The concepts of physical and spiritual death,
 - The atonement,
 - And the second coming of Christ.

- The resurrection of the dead is also connected to:
 - The larger biblical narrative of:
 - Creation,
 - The fall,
 - Redemption,
 - And restoration.

- In the New Testament,
 - Jesus teaches on the resurrection,
 - And it is closely tied to his own death,
 - And resurrection.

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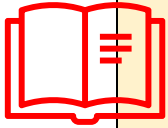
- Jesus gave a parable of the “**wheat and the tares:**”



- **Matthew 13:24–30 (NKJV)**

24 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; 25 but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. 26 But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. 27 So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ 28 He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’ 29 But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.” ’ ’ ”

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○ Matthew 13:36–43 (NKJV)

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.” 37 He answered and said to them: “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 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. 43 Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

- Jesus is speaking of a time:
 - When the righteous will be separated from the unrighteous,
 - And the righteous will shine like the sun.

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- This points to the idea that in the resurrection,
 - The **righteous** will be given **new, glorified** bodies,
 - While the **unrighteous** will be **cast** into the **eternal punishment** of hell.

- Now in order for us to believe in a future resurrection:
 - We must believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- If Jesus did not rise from the dead,
 - Then the Christian faith is a foolish fantasy.

- However, if the resurrection of Christ did occur,
 - It confirms His life message,
 - And work of redemption for the sinner.
 - This would be called the atoning work of Christ.

- The resurrection of Jesus Christ,
 - Is the foundation of our hope of life beyond the grave.

- Jesus is alive,
 - And the evidence is overwhelming.

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- Here are some of the reasons we can be so sure.


- 1) Jesus predicted His resurrection: 

- **Mark 9:9–10 (NKJV)**

9 Now as they came down from the mountain, He commanded them that they should tell no one the things they had seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead. 10 So they kept this word to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant.



- Other verses: Matt 16:21; John 2:18-22

- 2) The Old Testament prophesied it: 

- **Psalms 16:10–11 (NKJV)**


10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. 11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

- This Psalm is:
 - The Hope of the Faithful, and the Messiah's Victory



- Other verses to compare: Acts 2:25-31; 13:33-37

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- 3) The tomb was empty and the grave clothes vacant: 
 - For those who were against Jesus,
 - And wanted to silence His disciples,
 - All they had to do was produce a body,
 - But they couldn't.

- **John 20:3-9 (NKJV)**

3 Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. 4 So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. 5 And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, 7 and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. 8 Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. 9 For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

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- Again, we are looking at the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ...

○ 4) Many people saw the resurrected Christ.


- They looked at His face,
- They touched Him,
- They heard His voice,
- They saw Him eat.

• **1 Corinthians 15:3–8 (NKJV)**

3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. 6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. 7 After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. 8 Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

- Other verses: Matt. 28:16-20; Luke 24:13-39;  John 20:11-29; John 21:1-9; Acts 1:6-11.

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- 5) The lives of the disciples were transformed. 
- If you are familiar with the story:
 - They ran and denied Jesus at the time of His arrest.
- But later, they feared NO MAN when it came to their proclamation of the risen Christ:
 - The resurrection was the central message of the early church.

○ **Matthew 26:56 (NKJV)**

56 But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.

○ **Acts 5:29–32 (NKJV)**

29 But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. 31 Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.”

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- The church grew with an unwavering conviction,
 - That Jesus had risen,
 - And was the Lord of the church:


- **Acts 4:33 (NKJV)**

33 And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.

- **Romans 5:21 (NKJV)**

21 so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- 6) Men and women today testify that the power of the risen Christ has transformed their lives. 

- We know that Jesus is alive! 

- The evidence of His life is overwhelming.
- The evidence of His death is overwhelming.
- The evidence of His resurrection is overwhelming.

- We also have evidence of most you in this room.
 - He has miraculously touched your lives.

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- Because of the truth of the resurrected Christ! ...
 - We have the Doctrine of:
 - The **resurrection** of the **righteous** and **unrighteous**.

- I'm going to summarize the main points based on what we have studied this morning.
 - Because if you understand this,
 - And believe it.
 - Then vs 18 rings so true.

18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

● The Biblical Foundation of the Resurrection Doctrine



○ Key Verses Illustrating the Resurrection:

- 1) John 5:28-29
 - The call from the grave for both good and evil
- 2) Acts 24:15:
 - The shared hope of resurrection for all
- 3) 1 Corinthians 15:21-22:
 - The order of resurrection through Christ
- 4) Revelation 20:12-13:
 - The judgment follows resurrection.

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• The Place of Resurrection in Christian Theology



○ Eschatology and Soteriology:

- 1) Connection with the end times and salvation
- 2) The relationship with physical and spiritual death, atonement, and Christ's second coming
- 3) The overarching narrative of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration

○ The Moral and Righteous Life:

- 1) The eternal impact of living a moral and righteous life
- 2) Jesus as the mediator and the hope of eternal life through Him

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- **The Old and New Testament Perspective**



- **The Jewish Belief in Physical Resurrection:**

- 1) The righteous reward and the unrighteous punishment.
- 2) Evidence of this belief in Isaiah 26:19 and Daniel 12:2.

- **Jesus Teaching and the Early Christian Understanding:**

- 1) The bodily resurrection of the dead according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:42-44.
- 2) The implications of Jesus death and resurrection for the future of the righteous and unrighteous.

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- **The Impact and Significance of Jesus Resurrection in Christian Life.**



- **A Sign for Unbelievers and Assurance for Believers:**

- 1) Jesus' resurrection as a demonstration of His divine authority.
- 2) Encouragement for believers to overcome doubt.

- **The Essential Role in Evangelism and Christian Living:**

- 1. The motive for sharing the Gospel.
- 2. Empowerment for living out the Christian faith.

- **The Resurrection as Our Hope and Victory over Death:**

- 1. Comforting believers in the face of mortality.
- 2. Connection with Christ's second coming.

- **A Model and Foretaste of Our Own Resurrection and Heavenly Experience:**

- 1. The believers resurrection likened to Christ's.
- 2. An anticipation of the believer's eternal inheritance.

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Conclusion:



- Remember the fundamental role of the resurrection of Jesus ensures the promise for both the righteous and unrighteous.



- As Christians, our ultimate hope is anchored in the victory and assurance provided through the resurrection.



- We need to remember **“the effects”** of this truth in our daily lives, including evangelism, spiritual growth, and facing life's challenges.

- Let's remember that our ultimate hope and assurance,
 - Lies in the resurrection of Jesus Christ,
 - And his promise to raise us up to new life with Him.

18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

- In our next study,
 - We will look further at the **“when”** of the resurrections.
 - The Church (we just studied, at the rapture),
 - Old Testament Saints,
 - The unrighteous.
 - And the case for a Pretribulation Rapture.