



**Doctrine: The Rapture
What About Those Who Have Died in Christ?
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

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1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as indeed the rest of mankind do, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose from the dead, so also God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus. **For we say this to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise**



first. Then we who are alive, who remain, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore, comfort one another with these words.” (NASB 2020)

I also want to introduce us to a new word; you may see this in your studies. Parousia. It is the transliteration of a Greek word used by Paul and means coming.

As we see it in verse 15, it is the coming of the Lord, the Parousia of the Lord. Some folks who write commentaries like using the term.

Why is it that Paul felt it was necessary for him to write to the church about this topic? It was due to lies and deception. Why is it that I think the Holy Spirit gave me the go ahead to teach on the topic of the end of the age on top of our normal teaching each week? The exact same reason, the deception and lies of those who want to steal our joy and make us all miserable just like them.

To do that, they teach, as we have already pointed out, some really strange things to include the full preterist view that there is no rapture, everything took place a couple thousand years ago and we are now in the little season of Satan. All deception and all lies.

Why is it that no one comments on anything we put online, until we talk about the pretribulation rapture of the church?

2 Peter 3:3–4

“Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue just as they were from the beginning of creation.”” (NASB 2020)

The best defense to false truth is to know THE truth cold. Thus, we continue to discuss the topic of the re-tribution rapture of the church. Paul is writing also due to lies and deception.

First of all, why is Paul having to write about this? Paul and the team were only in Thessalonica for no more than three weeks before they had to leave going to Berea. In that short time, they taught the new believers there as much essential doctrine as they could.

After being forced to leave Berea as well, Paul went by ship to Athens most likely with Timothy who he then sent right back to Thessalonica to find out how they were doing.

Paul went on to Athens and then Corinth, and it was there the rest of the team caught up with him.

Timothy has brought the report of how the church in Thessalonica was doing. They were being persecuted, and rather severely it seems.

This missionary journey into Greece by Paul and the team was a direct assault on the forces of evil. It was an invasion of what Satan thought was a secure site. But once again, those pesky Christians showed up and began offensive operations to take those who were solidly in Satan’s camp, into the Lord’s instead.

Satan managed to get the ringleader, Paul, kicked out of the country so all he needed to do to end this was kill off those left behind.

But they were also leading others away from Satan as well into the enemy camp. You see, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.



Some of the members of this young church had died and coming from a pagan background as most of them had, they were still dealing with the idea of death being it, final with nothing after that. But they had been giving some training about the resurrection as well as the Day of the Lord.

One of the current signs we see all around us, screaming to us that Jesus is coming for His church, is the growing Laodicean church which is more into bench warming than into the Great Commission. Many who are bench warmers have head knowledge, at least enough for them to try and mislead you, but they have no zeal for the lost, just zeal for their particular theological bent. In fact, they will wax eloquent to you and me about how knowledgeable of the word they are but as they speak, you and I begin to realize they have knowledge, but no wisdom. The Holy Spirit seems to have left the house.

Something I have seen now for decades is where they tend to show up in order to argue and try to draw others away. Why is it that they tend to show up at Calvary Chapel I will never understand. We believe the rapture will take place before the beginning of the tribulation. But there are other views on that, and some are incredibly vocal about their viewpoint.

This is one of the reasons why we study the word and see what it has to say to us. Another reason is because of the voices busy trying to draw us away to be followers of them rather than followers of Jesus.

2 Timothy 4:2–4

“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.” (NKJV)

Paul warned Timothy of these folks who are not wanting to draw you to follow Jesus, but they want to draw you to follow them. And when Paul wrote it about the issue, he also showed that many times, it is because those being misled, want to hear certain things.

Who are these folks who come in to draw away? Over the years I have dealt with Jehovah’s Witnesses trying to infiltrate and draw others away. Various followers of reformed theology. This includes those who add replacement theology and tried to encourage us to stop loving Israel. And there the full preterists who believe everything we teach about the end times took place in 70 AD. The Millennium has already taken place, and the little season of Satan is now in play.

Add to that Mormons who were busy leaving flyers in car windows, at church no less, letting you and me know there is another testament of Jesus Christ. There isn’t.

Joseph Smith said the angel Moroni gave him the vision. Sounds like another guy in a cave in Saudi Arabia who said the same thing. The Good News Bible translation is really clear on this one.

Galatians 1:8–9

“But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel that is different from the one we preached to you, may he be condemned to hell! We have said it before, and now I say it again: if anyone preaches to you a gospel that is different from the one you accepted, may he be condemned to hell!” (GNB)

We show zero grace to those who want to lead you and me to hell.

We do indeed pray for them that they will be saved but it is my job to protect the flock. I forgot about the Hebrew Roots Movement folks, many who have now totally rejected Jesus in favor of being Noahides and



throwing themselves under the authority of the oral law of Moses. Shades of the Judaizers Paul wrote against.

And of course, I will never forget the seriously misled reformed antisemite who wanted to argue with me about why the church should not ever love Israel. I did point out Jesus was Jewish and he denied that too. Satan is busy which is why we keep looking to the Lord for His wisdom.

If you are here and you do not have the same view we have, we still love you and we can still have fellowship. But I am not interested in hearing from you why I am wrong, and you are right; and I will not argue with you either.

But I am glad there are those with the different views, Peter said that would be a characteristic of living in the last days after all.

The rapture of the church is a central doctrine of the church. Here at Calvary, we are waiting for the soon return of Jesus Christ for His church. **His return for us is the next major prophetic event for the church.** There are no signs or warnings, we are to be ready to go right now as His return is imminent.

Here is something we need to remember, prophecy and teaching on the end of the age, is exciting to new believers.

New believers is also why we see way too many showing up trying to draw them away. I remember Pastor Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa saying that was a problem they had as well when the Spirit moved, and they began seeing thousands saved.

We are in the harvest fields, and they are indeed ready for harvest. But there are those who just want to steal, rob and destroy because that is the modus operandi of the one they are following, and that isn't Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 4:13

"But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as indeed the rest of mankind do, who have no hope." (NASB 2020)

Paul and Silas go right after the concern brought to them by Timothy. Persecution was pretty rough and some had died as a result, plus life also in that area was rough too. So, there have been believers who have gone home to be with the Lord and when Jesus comes, are they going to miss out. Here in 1 Thessalonians, he wants the church to not be uninformed or without knowledge of the rapture and the second coming of Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 4:13)

Are there those today who want to mislead us concerning the doctrine of the pre-tribulation rapture of the church? Mark Hitchcock outlines some of those that have popped up in the past. "Classic examples of this have included Edgar Whisenant's book 88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1988; a Korean sect's newspaper ads predicting October 22, 1992, as the date of Christ's return; the widespread concerns over Y2K and J.M. Hile's Timeline 2000; Harold Camping's infamous "Judgment Day" prediction of May 21, 2011; the so-called Mayan calendar doomsday—December 21, 2012; and the four blood moons, which occurred on April 15, 2014; October 8, 2014; April 4, 2014; and September 27, 2015." (Hitchcock and Hindson 2018, 30) And it has not ended.

I must agree with Paul, I do not want us to be uninformed either. I want us to all understand the times in which we live, and that deception is still a problem for all of us. Paul goes right after the issue here. Jesus changed everything.



1 Thessalonians 4:14

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose from the dead, so also God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus.” (NASB 2020)

Death is not the end for the Christian. Paul calls it sleep but this is not soul sleep which would mean the dead are in a state of suspended animation awaiting the resurrection. No, not at all. All who die as believers immediately go to be with Jesus (Philippians 1:19-24). In fact, we will be escorted directly to His presence. (Luke 16:22)

David Guzik points out that “Early Christians began to call their burial places “cemeteries,” which means, “dormitories” or “sleeping places.” Yet the Bible never describes the death of the unbeliever as sleep, for there is no rest, peace, or comfort for them in death.” (Guzik 2013, 1 Th 4:13)

For the believer, at the moment of death, we go to be with Jesus. For the one who does not know Jesus, at the moment of death, they go to Sheol, the abode of the dead, also known as the realm of the dead or the underworld. The Old Testament refers to this place 64 times. In the New Testament it is called Hades.

There is no purgatory or limbo. When a person dies, if they are a believer, they go to be with the Lord. If they are no, they go to Sheol to wait for the Great White Throne judgment.

2 Corinthians 5:6–8

“So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.” (ESV)

Dr. Fruchtenbaum, a Messianic pastor and teacher, says this about purgatory.

Here is the problem with the so-called doctrine of purgatory, it “is a very clear denial of the finished work of the Messiah. The teaching of the New Testament is that when Jesus died on the cross it was a finished work and the finished work of the Messiah means that the sins of the believer have once and for all been purified. The believer does not need to go through a period of purging and purifying in Purgatory (Titus 2:14; Heb. 1:3). The work of the Messiah is finished, and that includes the total forgiveness of sins, so that the believer need not go through a temporary period of purging in Purgatory before he can enter into Heaven.” (Fruchtenbaum 2003, 760-761)

Oh, and no one is currently in hell. There will be no one there until the end of the Tribulation takes place. Then hell will receive it's first two residents, the Beast and the False Prophet (Revelation 19:20).

Others will be arriving shortly after as a result of the sheep and goats judgement (Matthew 25:41-46). At the end of the Millennium, Satan and his minions arrive and then the rest of the population of hell will arrive as a result of the Great Throne Judgement. That is when those who are in Sheol/Hades are resurrected to stand judgement before Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 4:15–16

“For we say this to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.” (NASB 2020)

Paul and the church in Thessalonica expected and believed that Jesus was about to break into time and space and begin the great reset by removing the church. The concern of those who had died would miss



out, was not something that should be worried about. You see, when He changes us, we who are alive will be the second change of the day.

What Paul tells those in Thessalonica is don't stop looking for Jesus to return. Keep looking. Jesus Himself has given Paul this communication on the rapture. How sure is Paul of this? Jesus told Him sure. Those of us who are alive will not be first, those who are the dead in Christ, those who have come with Him and are there in the clouds with Him will be resurrected into glorified bodies and they go first. There is no way that those who have died in Christ are going to miss this event. They get front row seats and are there in the heavens waiting for us.

Paul, how do we know when that is taking place?

It will not be a secret, not at all. It will be a very noisy event.

What are we being told here?

Jesus Christ, as He promised in John 14:3 is personally coming back for His own. So, when we see, that in a scenario based on a word from the Lord to Paul, that it begins with a personal manifestation of Jesus Christ, we immediately see it as fulfillment of His prophesied return for His church. There is no angelic entourage, it is Jesus with all of the amassed church around Him.

1 Thessalonians 4:17–18

"Then we who are alive, who remain, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore, comfort one another with these words." (NASB 2020)

Those of us who are here on the earth alive when Jesus returns will then be caught up. That is the word we have discussed before, harpazo. Suddenly and with force, we are caught up, removed, taken from the surface of the planet. We will be meeting Jesus in the clouds where He waits with all the resurrected saints, for us.

Satan is referred to as the prince of the power of the air in the scriptures (Ephesians 2:2) and once again, Jesus will intentionally tweak Satan by meeting all His church there signifying that they have been taken from the gates of hell and being delivered to the presence of Jesus by the power of God.

Once we are caught up to be with Jesus and the rest of the church, then that is where we will be forever. We will always be with the Lord. Paul concludes his thoughts on this with comfort one another with these words.

Are you ready for this?

Romans 3:21–24

"But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins." (NLT)

Romans 10:9–13

"If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be



disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

ABC’s of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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