

“You Asked For It 25”
“What is the Rapture?”
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NIV)

Hey Newsong!

I want to take a moment and welcome our first-time guests and those watching with us online!

I’m so glad that you’re here! Hey we’re in week two of our series “You Asked For It”

And basically a couple of months back...we asked you if you had a question about life, or the Bible that you would like answered in a sermon let us know...

Now if you’re thinking...I never asked a question...it’s okay! Next week we’ll be taking your questions live...so there’s still time!

Last week I answered the question “What happens to us after we die?” We looked into God’s Word and discovered that the moment we die we are immediately in eternity. Those who are saved are immediately in Heaven...

The Apostle Paul tells us in **2 Corinthians 5:8** **“To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord”** as believers, we don’t have to fear death...Death is as scary as falling asleep...

Now sadly, that’s not the case for those who have rejected God...those who are far away from God...when they die they are immediately brought into eternity...but they don’t find themselves in Heaven...they find themselves in hell...

If you missed last week...you can view it on our YouTube channel...

Today, we're going to continue along this theme only instead of focusing on what happens to us when we die...We're going to focus on what happens to the living when Jesus comes back for His church...

Today I'm answering the question "What is the Rapture?"

13 Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. 14 For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 15 According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.

16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.-1 Th 4:13-18 (NIV)

Pray

A couple of weeks ago I was in the office with PC & Sammy, and we were talking when all of a sudden the fire alarm went off...

We walked into the hall and we see people from other businesses and organizations and we're all kind of looking at each other...Do we go? Do we stay? Is this a test? Is this only a test?

We ended up going outside just in case it was real...and I'm happy to tell you that it was nothing...it was a false alarm...

Since we were all outside we decided to get some lunch...

The purpose of an alarm is to alert you...
Hey it's time to get up...Yo...sleeping beauty
you're going to be late...It's to wake you up out
of your sleep...

An alarm is used to warn you of possible
danger...When you hear the fire alarm you're
not supposed to do what Sammy and I did...

You're supposed to evacuate the building...

I remember being in church in 2012...I was a
staff pastor and during the third service
everyone's cell phone simultaneously went off
during the pastor's sermon...

That was the first time I had ever experienced something like that...I looked down and it was an evacuation notice...It said something like severe weather coming...leave...get to higher ground...

Story about not leaving before Hurricane Sandy

24 to 30 hrs later Hurricane Sandy hit NYC...Our family members were worried because we didn't evacuate

That's what's going on in our text this morning...

As I said last week, the Thessalonians were worried about what was going to happen to their loved ones who died before the "great evacuation" of the church...also known as the rapture...

And

...

So the rapture is part of the study of end times...

Now when it comes to the end times and the second coming of Jesus... People who love Jesus and are saved have differing opinions...I'll get into that in a second...

What we can all agree on is that Jesus is coming back...It's not "if" He's coming back, but "when" "at what point" is He coming back? That's where people differ...

We believe that the Bible clearly teaches that Jesus will rapture the church before He physically returns to the earth...

So let me answer some FAQ's to help us out...

“Why isn’t the word “rapture” in the Bible?

Well, it’s because we have an English Bible...

Let’s look at verse 17 of our text

17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

We don’t see the word rapture because the word rapture comes from the Latin Vulgate which uses the word “**rapio**”

Our New Testament was written in Greek which translates rapio as **harpazo**...Guess what they both mean? To snatch away, to be pulled away, to be plucked away by force, to be taken away...to be “Caught Up”

Now some people will say that the doctrine of the rapture isn't biblical...yet we can clearly see it in the scriptures...

The Apostle Paul writes

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."-1 Co 15:51-54 (NLT)

Jesus said...

“Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. 2 There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? 3 When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.-Jn 14:1–3 (NLT)

Again...Jesus said

37 “When the Son of Man returns, it will be like it was in Noah’s day. 38 In those days before the flood, the people were enjoying banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his boat. 39 People didn’t realize what was going to happen until the flood came and swept them all away. That is the way it will be when the Son of Man comes. 40 “Two men will be working together in the field; one will be taken, the other left.

41 Two women will be grinding flour at the mill; one will be taken, the other left. Mt 24:37–41 (NLT)

So even though we don't see the actual word "rapture" in the Bible...we see many scriptures that talk about Jesus returning for His church...

"When will the rapture take place?"

In Matthew 24 Jesus is talking about the end times and He talks about the world going through the worst suffering in human history...It's known as "The Great Tribulation"

It's also known as...

"The time of Jacob's Trouble"

"The 70th week of Daniel"

"The Day of Wrath"

"The Hour of Testing"

Whichever name you would like to call it...most scholars believe that this period of tribulation is going to last for 7 years...

So there are three main views on the timing of the rapture...

Post-Tribulation Rapture

People who hold to this view, believe that the true church will go through the entire tribulation period...

In other words we will suffer with the world, but stand firm in our faith...stand firm in our witness and continue to preach the Gospel through the tribulation. They would say that the rapture and the second coming are the same event...

Mid-Tribulation Rapture

Those who hold to this view, believe that the church will go through the first 3.5 years of the tribulation and that Jesus will rapture the church in the middle of the tribulation...

Again...those who hold to these views love the Lord and believe He's coming back...I don't have the time to do a deep dive into why they hold to the view they do...

Pre-Tribulation Rapture

This is the view that we hold too...

We believe that the Bible teaches that God will rescue His church before the great tribulation begins...

In the introduction to his letter to the church in Thessalonica Paul writes...

9 for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath-1 Th 1:9–10 (NIV)

9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.-1 Th 5:9 (NIV)

Peter says in **2 Peter 2** “That the Lord knows how to rescue godly people...”

So we believe that God is going to come back for His Bride before all hell breaks out...

We also believe that the rapture will be sudden and that it can happen at any time...

Paul writes

5 Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, 2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night-1 Th 5:1–2 (NIV)

Peter writes...

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. -2 Pe 3:10 (NIV)

James writes...

8 You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. 9 Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!-Jas 5:8–9 (NIV)

His return is imminent...it could happen at anytime which is why Jesus repeatedly warns that all believers should...

“Keep watch”

“Be ready”

“Stay Awake”

All through the NT there's this theme to be looking for and anticipating Jesus' return...

I like what Theologian and author Zenas Bicket writes...

If we really believe that Jesus could come for us at any time, our lives—our words, actions, and choices—should reflect that truth. Those who are washed in the blood of the Lamb should live moment by moment with that expectation. Such an outlook would revolutionize our personal relationships and adjust the things we value most. May the imminent likelihood of the Rapture permeate our lives. The day is much closer today than it has ever been in the past.

Zenas Bicket, [Eschatology: A Study of Things to Come : An Independent-Study Textbook](#), Second Edition. (Springfield, MO: Global University, 2006), 65.

Jesus could return at any moment...we need to be ready for Him!

So let's look again at our main text...

13 Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope.

(BTW we also refer to The Rapture as The Blessed Hope) Those who have already died in Christ...their soul and spirit goes immediately to Heaven in God's presense...

14 For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 15

According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. Paul

was anticipating the return of the Lord at any moment...He didn't say you who are still alive...He included himself!

16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet

call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise

first. Now remember what we learned last week...Those who have died and are saved...their spirit and soul is instantly brought to heaven...but their body is still here...

So at the rapture all of those people who died in Christ...their bodies will supernaturally transform from bone, dust and ash into a glorified body...

17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in

the air. This is where our bodies will instantly be changed...in the twinkling of an eye...we get our new glorified bodies

And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.-1 Th 4:13-18 (NIV)

This is the hope we have!

Why do some people say that Jesus is coming back on September 23rd 2025?

I want to address this...because it's all over social media...People are predicting this...

Get ready Jesus is coming back on September 23rd because it's Rosh Hashanna...It's the Feast of Trumpets...

And what does the Bible say in our main text?

16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

And not only that but I had a dream...I had a vision...I was eating my chopped cheese and all of a sudden the number 23 appeared...

People are coming up with all kinds of reasons and setting specific dates...

In all seriousness...We do see many significant events in the Bible happen on a Jewish holy day...

Tiff Shuttlesworth who is an evangelist and also the President of North Point Bible College points this out...

“Jesu’s crucifixion occurred on Passover, symbolizing His role as the Lamb of God whose sacrificial death delivers believers from sin”

“Following Passover, Jesus’s body lay in the tomb during the Feast of Unleavened Bread,

which represents the removal of sin and the hope of living a new, pure life”

“Jesus’s resurrection happened on the day of the Feast of First Fruits...

Connecting Him as “the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep” celebrated on the third day of Passover”

“The Holy Spirit was poured out on the apostles and believers, during The Feast of Weeks, giving birth to the Church on the Day of Pentecost, which fifty days after the Feast of First Fruits”

So we do see significant events happening on Jewish Holy days, feasts and festivals...So is it possible that Jesus could return this year during the feast of trumpets...Of course it’s possible...

It's possible that Jesus can come back today before we're done...But does it have to be on a Jewish holy day or festival? I would say no

And I would also say that you should never listen to a teacher or preacher who sets a specific day for Jesus' return...

"Hey you better be ready for Jesus to come back on this day..." No you better be ready for Jesus to come back every day!

Here's what Jesus says about setting a date for the rapture or His return...

36 "However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows-Mt 24:36 (NLT)

If someone ever tries telling you that they know when Jesus is coming back...tell them I've got a word from God just for you...

33 *And since you don't know when that time will come, be on guard! Stay alert!*-Mark 13:33 (NLT)

Does the Bible give us signs that point to Jesus' return?

Yes it does...

Jesus tells us...

4 Jesus told them, “*Don't let anyone mislead you, 5 for many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah.’ They will deceive many. 6 And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don't panic. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won't follow immediately. 7 Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.*”

There will be famines and earthquakes in many parts of the world. 8 But all this is only the first of the birth pains, with more to come. 9 “Then you will be arrested, persecuted, and killed. You will be hated all over the world because you are my followers. 10 And many will turn away from me and betray and hate each other. 11 And many false prophets will appear and will deceive many people. 12 Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold. Mt 24:4–13 (NLT)

Isn't that our world today? Look at verse 12 again and think about the horrible things that have topped the headlines in our own country over the past couple of weeks...

We've got school shootings...like every other day...one this past Wednesday in Colorado sending two students to the hospital...

One a couple weeks ago at a Catholic school in Minnesota... 2 children murdered while they were praying...

A woman coming home from work... viciously stabbed to death on the train in Charlotte NC...

Charlie Kirk murdered as he was speaking on a college campus in Utah...

Sin is rampant...Hearts are cold...

Now one could argue that these things happen every day in our world...and I agree...But look what Jesus says a few verses later...

33 In the same way, when you see all these things, you can know his return is very near, right at the door.-Mt 24:33 (NLT)

Are we seeing these kinds of signs happening at the same time? Yes we are!

Are they becoming more and more frequent?
Yes they are!

In this portion of Scripture Jesus is speaking about His physical return...the rapture would have already happened...

Now put two and two together...if we're seeing all of these signs take place...and they're getting worse and worse...how close must we be to the rapture?

What I'm saying is that the next major event is the rapture of the church...It's that close! Jesus is coming back for His church before all hell breaks loose!

While we're all enjoying and worshiping Jesus in Heaven, the anti-christ will rise to power here on earth...and the great tribulation will begin...

As we close today

I want to issue the same challenge to you that I issued last Sunday...Maybe you don't agree with our view of the rapture...maybe you're post-tribulation or mid-tribulation...

The point is, if you're saved, you're going to make the trip no matter what!

My question is are you living your life ready to meet Jesus?

If you really believe that Jesus could return at any moment it should motivate us to live holy lives...

It's like Sammy said a couple of weeks ago in his message about being ready for the return of Jesus...

When you have company over you clean up the house...all of the rooms...even ones you don't use!

Maybe you've got some rooms in your heart
that the Holy Spirit is telling you to clean up...

You've got some dirty laundry piled up...some
garbage that needs to be brought to the curb...
Cooperate with the Holy Spirit...

Greg Laurie says *"The rapture isn't about
prediction it's about preparation"*

It's time to wake up...be prepared...Jesus is
coming back very soon...

Maybe for some it's not cleaning up as much as
it is showing up...

You're watching the sky ready to fly...while the
world is going to hell...It's time to get involved!

It's time to live out your God-given purpose...
It's time to make a difference in this world...
Maybe for you it's time to join the Dream Team

Or to start giving to missions so we can continue to support missionaries and fill needs in our community!

Are you giving your time, talent and treasure to something bigger than you?

What are you waiting for? Jesus is coming back! The time is now!

I want to speak to you if you're here or watching online and you're far away from God...

Here's the deal...God is holy, righteous and just...and because of that, all sin and unrighteousness will be judged and punished...

The Bible tells us that we're all sinners which means that somebody's got to pay for your sin...Either you're going to pay for your own sin...or you're going to let Jesus pay for it...He used His blood...When He died on the cross

If you place your faith in Him...if you trust Him to be your Lord and Savior, you will not face the wrath of God

But His wrath is coming...

But you still have time to escape His wrath...God loves you so much that He's ringing the alarm...don't just stand in the hall and wonder who's going to save you...

Jesus stands ready to save you...Run to Him!

What's the Holy Spirit saying to you?

