



**Doctrine: The Rapture of the Church
About Those Who Have Gone Before Us, a Reunion is Coming
Part 4
1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11**

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Contrary to what some are now saying on You Tube, Facebook and other social media platforms. We are not already in the Tribulation. That question was one of the reasons why Paul and Silas are responding back to the church in Thessalonica. They thought that they had missed the rapture, and they were not in the Tribulation.



Jesus promised to come for us and take us to be with Him. We clearly saw that last week. Paul will reemphasize and add to his teaching that yes indeed, we will be removed before the beginning of the Tribulation. We go up and wrath comes down, just like with Lot.

We have slowed down a bit in our study of the book of 1 Thessalonians so we could do a deeper dive into a doctrine of the church that Paul teaches on. The doctrine of the rapture of the church. A doctrine that some are confused about.

But Ken, the word rapture is not in the Bible. Yes, the word rapture is not in the Greek. Harpazo (take by force, to snatch away) is the Greek word used by Paul in our text, but we know the doctrine via the Latin word rapiemur, which means to seize. It is translated caught up. Oh, and that is also where we obtain the term, rapture, from the Latin. So, the word is in the Bible, it just happens to be the Latin Bible.

1 Thessalonians 4:17

“Deinde nos, qui vivimus, qui relinquimur, simul **rapiemur** cum illis in nubibus obviam Christo in aëra, et sic semper cum Domino erimus.” (Biblia Sacra Juxta Vulgatam Clementinam 2005, 1 Thess 4:17)

We are studying the doctrine of the rapture of the church, and I am excited to reach this point in our study.

We have examined where the rapture is in the Bible, examples of raptures and some rescues as well in the Bible, and how God has not allowed His kids to go through His wrath. We have seen that He even rescues those from it who haven't been exactly walking and following Him like they should, like Lot.

We are continuing our direct examination of the texts we find in the New Testament that address the doctrine of the rapture of the church.

Our Map

- John 14:1-3 Jesus - I go to prepare a place and will come back and get you.
- **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 First the rapture.**
- 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 Then the Day of the Lord.
- 1 Corinthians 15:51-58 Details about what the resurrection and the rapture looks like.
- 2 Thessalonians 2:3a First the apostasy.
- 2 Thessalonians 2:3b Then the Beast, antichrist, man of sin, etc. is revealed.

We have examined the introduction to the topic of the pretribulation rapture of the church given to us by Jesus in John 14. Now we will pick up with Paul and his teaching on the topic.

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.

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)

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 then went on to Corinth where he established a base of operations, 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.

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.

I love teaching new believers, the hunger for the word and the faith to simply believe what the word says has not yet been corrupted by blasé Christians who have been bench warming for decades.

The bench warmer has knowledge but no zeal at all. And there seems to be a growing movement these days of those who want to impress you with the theological slant they have, to the knowledge they have amassed. And how important it is for you to personally recognize them for that and simply agree with all they have to say since they have obviously worked so hard to be so unbalanced in their approach to scripture.

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.

I am thankful for every single person who comes to Calvary and participates in the ministry here, we follow Jesus. Please remember that because there are those who want you to follow them.

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.

We teach the whole counsel of God, chapter by chapter, verse by verse. Not everyone wants that. And there are things I would prefer to skip over, but we don't. We teach the whole counsel of God.

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)

And in they come, showing up here at Calvary in order to confuse and draw away. It seems that their avowed goal is to see how many others they can convince of their viewpoint.



Who are these folks who come in to draw away? Over the years we 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 are those who are preterists and believe everything we teach about the end times took place in 70 AD.

Mormons leaving flyers in car windows. Hebrew Roots Movement who wanted us to throw all of Paul's teachings out, as well as Acts and Luke. Then full-blown antisemitic Christians, if that is even possible.

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.

2 Peter 3:3–9

"Above all, understand this: In the last days blatant scoffers will come, being propelled by their own evil urges and saying, "Where is his promised return? For ever since our ancestors died, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of creation." For they deliberately suppress this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago and an earth was formed out of water and by means of water. Through these things the world existing at that time was destroyed when it was deluged with water. But by the same word the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire, by being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. Now, dear friends, do not let this one thing escape your notice, that a single day is like a thousand years with the Lord and a thousand years are like a single day. The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some regard slowness, but is being patient toward you, because he does not wish for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." (NET 2nd ed.)

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.

Looking at our text here in 1 Thessalonians, it appears there were some, who had understood Paul and Silas to say that all who believed would see the second coming of Jesus Christ. You see Paul and Silas were not there to add in course correction and answer questions as they came up. They were there for a couple of week and then gone.

Working with new believers, I give them a way to ask me questions. Usually texting, sometimes email, but I have found that when the question arises, it usually is urgent to them and as a result, to me as well. As we grow and find ourselves discipling more new believers, this becomes an even more important aspect of ministry.

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.



As a new believer, I remember the excitement I had over last things. I remember reading Revelation for the first time a couple of months after being saved. I began to buy every book I could on the topic and let me just be really honest with you, some of them were downright weird. In fact, some of the ones being written today, still are. Good solid discernment with an application of Acts 17:11 is required.

There were also some really bad movies made too. One had actual giant scorpions depicting events of Revelation 9. But as bad as it was, people were being saved.

For Paul and Silas, though, they go right after the elephant in the room, the untimely death of brothers and sisters in Christ due to persecution and or just due to life in the 1st century AD. This appears to be a primary question of concern brought to them by Timothy along with his report. Just what exactly happens to those who die before the Lord returns?

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 is continuing to complete what was lacking in the faith of the Thessalonian church (1 Thessalonians 3:10). He starts off wanting them to not be ignorant of the topic, to not be uninformed or not knowing what the truth is.

This was obviously a big deal for Paul, wanting believers to not be uninformed. Five times in his letters he hits the topic of wanting those he is teaching to not be uninformed. When you see the topics, they are all items that some continue to be confused about today.

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)

In Romans 11:25, he wants the church to not be uninformed of Gods continuing plan for Israel. There is no place for replacement theology per Paul. God is not done with Israel yet.

In 1 Corinthians 12:1 Paul expresses the same concern for the church to not be unaware of spiritual gifts.

In 2 Corinthians 2:11 we are told we are not to be ignorant of Satan’s schemes. Unfortunately, many today do not take him serious at all and consider him to be a figment of their imagination. “Seven out of ten young teens (70%) either reject the existence of Satan or don’t know if he exists.” (Barna 2023, 32)

And finally in 2 Corinthians 1:8, he wants the church to not be unaware of there being suffering and trials in the Christian life. And there are bookshelves of heretical teachings available on that one.

All five of these topics are ones which even today, there is a lot of confusion about, and there really shouldn’t be. It seems that when the plain word of the text is simply not adequate, because it seems simply too astounding to accept, then confusion results.

All five topics have those defending their aberrant views which can only be reached if you do not have a balanced view of the text and the appropriate respect for the text and its inerrancy.

This is the primary reason why, as we arrived at this point in the text, I thought it was important for us to review and understand the doctrine the Bible teaches.

Plus, today this is also one of those topics being used by others to draw believers away to follow them instead of following the Lord.



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)

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.

For Paul though, the problem was more basic, the church had those in it who truly thought that since some of their members had died in the faith, that they were going to miss out on what Jesus was going to do when He comes back. Some of those in the body who came from a Jewish background probably did not help achieve clarity either as they did believe in a resurrection, but in a different timing from what Paul taught.

In Jewish teaching prior to Jesus the resurrection is something that takes place at the end of history (Daniel 12:2). But in the Christian gospel, and especially in Paul's letters, Jesus' resurrection shifts the temporal orientation of the resurrection. Jesus is raised not when history ends but as it continues. That resurrection means that those who are united with Christ are raised with him, experiencing from their baptism onward the new life of eternity even while they live in the present world (cf. Rom 6:3–4). (Weatherly 1996, 1 Th 4:13-18)

It also guarantees that at the end of the church age, when Christ appears as promised in John 14 to take us to be with Him, that all who have died in Him will be raised to new life in Him. But if you come from a gentile pagan background, you have never had a belief in the resurrection at all. Death was the end.

The church was experiencing grief over the loss, probably due to persecution, of some of their members. Paul wants them to understand and not to grieve as the world does, "who have no hope."

As Christians, even in the 21st century, the origins of this issue are something we must be on the lookout for as well in our own lives.

It appears that the old man, the old nature and the things we believed when we were part of the world are, at times, difficult to separate ourselves from. We like it when there is a short and sweet epigram, something we can cite that provides a kernel of truth. "God is love" is an example. That statement is incredibly true but taken alone and without the additional pieces of information that He hates sin but has provided for us a way out through Jesus Christ. Then that is all it is, a true statement that leaves us with a false sense of entitlement.

There are also those things which are old, familiar, and completely false, like, "God helps those who help themselves."

Or my personal favorite, "God never gives you more than you can handle." Job probably would not have agreed with that.

For us, the theory of and teaching of evolution has affected our thinking much more than we would like to admit. We were created, we did not evolve. Because we were created by a creator, that creator can do with us as He desires. That means, if He chooses to resurrect us and give us new bodies while at the same time, He translates those of us who are alive into those same new bodies, that is His prerogative, and He can and will indeed do so.



Paul's intent is to provide comfort to those who were grieving for their lost loved ones, and he wraps that comfort up in what it is Jesus achieved for us.

He has told the church to not be uninformed, death is not the end and because that is true, we should not grieve as the world does thinking that it is. Then he goes further to explain how 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)

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, then you do indeed believe that Jesus died on the cross and rose again from the dead. His resurrection is the guarantee for what Jesus taught about the rapture.

But if you are a skeptic, then how can you know He resurrected?

When I was learning how to be a historian, one of the things you come to is historical evidence.

When an event or saying is attested by more than one independent source, there is a strong indication of historicity. (Habermas and Licona 2004, 37)

I was minding my own business returning from a meeting sitting at a red light when the light turned green. In the car in front of me is the base JAG and as he pulls out, a car runs the red light and almost hits him. Horns blow all around. I am in a marked patrol unit so lights siren radio call ticket book in five minutes I am interviewing a man who says not only was there no red light, but there is no stop light there at all. I gave him the ticket anyhow since if push came to shove, the JAG made a pretty good witness to the truth.

1 Corinthians 15:3–8

"For I passed on to you as of first importance what I also received—that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than 500 of the brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as though to one born at the wrong time, he appeared to me also." (NET 2nd ed.)

Add to that Josephus, Tacitus, Lucian and others.

After Jesus' death, the lives of the disciples were transformed to the point that they endured persecution and even martyrdom. Such strength of conviction indicates that they were not just claiming that Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to them in order to receive some personal benefit. They really believed it. (Habermas and Licona 2004, 56)

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)

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.

At one time there were two sides to Sheol, one side was paradise also known as the bosom of Abraham, the other as Sheol. When Jesus rose from the dead, He emptied out Paradise.

Sheol/Hades is not hell but is a holding cell for the spirits of all those who in this life, did not come to know the Lord. There is no second chance. There is no such thing as purgatory, praying the dead out of punishment, or anything like that.

In the Old Testament, Sheol is always down. The bad side has levels too. Deuteronomy 32:22 talks about the lowest parts of Sheol which implies that there are levels of punishment even while being held until final judgment. This place is referred to as Hades in the New Testament.

Thanks to Jesus and His discussion of Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16, we also know that everyone is fully conscious of what is going on around them and they know where they are and why they are there.

It is also a place that is under God's jurisdiction (Job 26:6).

And about purgatory. It doesn't exist. It wound up being nothing more than a money-making endeavor for the Catholic Church. You want your loved one out of purgatory, then give XX to the church.

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 its 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.

How alive and engaged are those who have gone before us? Per Jesus in Luke 16, conversations are taking place, on both sides.

We are provided a picture of Sheol as it is on the holding cell side as the King of Babylon arrives.

Isaiah 14:9-11

"Sheol below is stirred up about you, ready to meet you when you arrive. It rouses the spirits of the dead for you, all the former leaders of the earth; it makes all the former kings of the nations rise from their thrones. All of them respond to you, saying: 'You too have become weak like us! You have become just like us! Your splendor has been brought down to Sheol, as well as the sound of your stringed instruments. You lie on a bed of maggots, with a blanket of worms over you.'" (NET 2nd ed.)



As believers, we can have full confidence that our loved ones who have gone home before us, are right now in the presence of Jesus and all the saints and they are fully conscious, and they know where they are and who they are with. I can't wait and neither can Paul.

There was this buzz, this false teaching that those who had died would miss out. Not hardly. You see, when Jesus comes back to get us, He brings them with Him. Remember, once we go to be with Jesus, we are with Him forever.

If you die without Jesus, then you will have what you wanted for all eternity, no Jesus. All you have to look forward to is the judgement.

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.

He is the one descending from heaven, He promised, and He always keeps His promises.

What does “descending from heaven” mean? Is this like the reentry of a satellite? No. This is a cross dimensional intrusion into our present space and time by the God of the universe. Call it an extraterrestrial invasion.

Paul expects to be part of this as well. He uses a first-person plural construction as he states his hope in the rapture.

He believed that he and many of his contemporaries would still be alive at the time of the Lord's coming. (Wanamaker 1990, 171)



Yes, Jesus will be reentering the atmosphere of this planet.

He will indeed travel from (or through) the atmospheric heavens to earth, but more significantly He “will descend” from the heavenly realm (the presence of God) to the physical earth. (Hart 2015, 156)

As this invasion takes place, it appears to be a noisy event. “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God...” (1 Thessalonians 4:16a, NASB 2020)

Three successive sounds is what we see in the text. As Jesus enters into this present dimension, as the portal breaks open, a shout is heard. The word is κελεύσματι (keleusmati). It means a summons to carry out a procedure, e.g. battle engagement...signal, (cry of) command, of a signal for engagement in battle. (Arndt, et al. 2000, 538)

The shout is a command from the King, a procedure or major engagement is about to take place and the King is fully in command as He personally enters this dimension to remove His own.

I am reminded of what Jesus did when He raised Lazarus from the dead.

John 11:43

“When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.”” (ESV)

That too was the voice of a command. What is the shout, could it be the name of everyone with Him in the clouds as He calls for them to be resurrected into their glorified bodies? It is a shout of a military commander taking place implying not only the authority required, but the urgency of the matter as well.

The next term in our translation, the voice of the archangel, may be a bit misleading. In the Greek, the text simply follows with the phrase, ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου (in phonei archangellou). There is no article here. It reads “in voice archangel.” We are not told the name of any archangel as we are in Jude 9, the only other place archangel is used in the New Testament. Who is making this sound? Whoever it is it is a serious voice of command and sounds archangelic like.

The text tells us Jesus enters into this dimension and as He does so, there is a shout of command sounding archangel like.

Or, as God shouts out the command regarding resurrection, almost instantaneously, just like a senior NCO repeating the order, comes the archangelic like cry as well. There is no doubt that this is a military operation taking place.

Then there is that third sound, “with the trumpet of God.” Once again, this is all connected with calling those who sleep, to life.

In the Old Testament, trumpets sounded the alarm for war and threw the enemy into a panic, in the sense of the seven trumpets described in Numbers 10:9 and Revelation 8 and 9. Trumpets also sounded an assembly of God’s people, as in Leviticus 23:24 and Numbers 10:2. (Guzik 2013, 1 Th 4:15-16)

Here, the trumpet calls together God’s people. The rapture of the church will not be a secret silent event. With all of that taking place, at the same moment, the dead in Christ are resurrected.

What is clear is this. When the Father turns to Jesus and says, “Go get them.” The fact of the event taking place will be announced to the universe rather forcefully. There will be no doubt as to what is happening for the believer. To the unbeliever, they may just be hearing noise.



But what a noise. The graves of Christians everywhere on the planet, emptied in a millisecond and at almost the same moment, all believers across the planet are gone too. Then there are all of the children below the age of accountability as well as those mentally disabled individuals who never grew beyond that. Billions suddenly gone.

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 of the resurrected saints, for us.

The word used for meeting here is *ἀπάντησιν* (*apantēsin*). “The word *ἀπάντησις* is to be understood as a technical term for a civic custom of antiquity whereby a public welcome was accorded by a city to important visitors. Similarly, when Christians leave the gates of the world, they will welcome Christ in the *ἀήρ*, acclaiming Him as *κύριος*.” (Peterson 1964-, 380-381)

It is a measure of the Lord’s complete supremacy that he should meet his saints in such a region, for the air was held to be the abode of all manner of evil spirits. (Morris 1984, 92)

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.

Jesus provided us the prophecy of what His return for His own looks like in John 14:1-3; and Paul explains what the fulfillment of that return looks like here in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Jesus is coming again to take us to be with Him, His return is imminent. Here is where comfort and hope comes into this.

Jesus Christ was literally crucified, buried and bodily raised from the dead in a physical body. Jesus literally and physically ascended to heaven to be seated at the right hand of the Father.

The term used to describe those events are also terms being used to describe this event.

Because of the truth of the first two events involving Jesus, we can take to the bank this pending even will indeed take place literally and physically just as it is described.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 is a blow-by-blow description of a bridegroom coming for His bride.

This is a bride who has been made ready for her reception at the groom’s home (cf. Eph. 5:26–27). Once the groom meets the bride, He takes the bride to His Father’s house (cf. John 14:2–3) where the wedding feast will complete the formal union of marriage (cf. Rev. 19:7–9). The first metaphor pictures an event based on elements found nowhere else in the New Testament to describe Christ’s relationship with His church. But the second metaphor correctly incorporates several other key texts and provides a richer



explanation of the event, using a recognized biblical metaphor—bride/church and Bridegroom/Christ. (Hart 2015, 160)

Once we leave this planet to be with Jesus, then that is where we will be found. We certainly will not be found here on earth.

In order to participate in this imminent event, you must be a believer in Jesus Christ. If you are not, then you are not part of the church and you will be left behind when the rapture takes place.

Resolve that issue right now by believing in Jesus.

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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