



Title: The Rapture

Date: January 8, 2023

Scripture Text: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

During our study of Revelation, between chapters 4 and 5, the last major event of the church here on earth occurs: the Rapture. Rapture means to ‘snatch away’, or ‘carry off’. Many wonder what the rapture is and how it will happen. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 describes the events surrounding the rapture or removing the church in preparation for the coming seven years of tribulation. Paul, as he addresses the Christians in Thessalonica, wants to comfort their concerns about what happens to those who pass away before Jesus returns. Just as Paul sought to comfort his readers back then, we can also find comfort in his words and his charge to comfort one another.

I. The Purpose of the Passage (1 Thess. 4:13, 18)

The Thessalonian Christians were concerned for those they knew who died before the second coming of Christ. Paul wanted them to know what will happen when Christ returns and to find comfort in their relationship with Christ. In addition, he wanted them to comfort each other by recognizing the hope they have in Christ.

- What did Paul mean when he didn’t want his readers to grieve as those who have no hope? What is the hope that Christians have?
- This ‘hope’ is not wishful thinking (I hope we win our game), but an assurance given by the word of God. How can this hope effect how we face the future?
- Why do you think Paul referred to those who had passed away as “asleep”?
- Why is it important to be informed when it comes to God’s word? How can this help us interpret our circumstances?

II. The Basis of Belief (1 Thess. 4:14-15)

Paul wanted his readers to know how events would unfold when Christ returned. The fact that Christ was resurrected and was with God was evidence that their loved ones would also be with God. He also mentions that additional evidence comes by the word of the Lord ([Matt. 24:31](#)). Paul described how those who were still alive at Christ’s return would not precede those who had already “fallen asleep”.

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- As Paul describes the events surrounding the return of Christ, why do you think he said, “**we** who are alive”?
- Do you agree with Paul’s perspective that these events might happen in your lifetime? Why?
- How can the assurance of Christ’s resurrection and God’s word bring comfort in all areas of life?

III. The Revelation of the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:16-17)

Paul describes the details of what happens when Christ returns. Those who have died will rise first, then those who are alive will join them as they meet Jesus. Jesus’ return will be unmistakable. It will be accompanied by a shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God. Everyone will know of Christ’s return. Jesus warns us in [Matthew 24:23-27](#) not to be fooled by those claiming to be Him in the last days. When He returns, everyone will know it!!

- How long does Paul say we will be with Jesus at the end of [verse 17](#)?
- According to [Matt. 24:36](#), when will all this take place?
- Describe what you think this reunion will be like, to see Christian family and friends who have passed away as you all are gathered together with Christ.
- Read [Matt. 24:43-46](#), describing the faithful servant.
 - What does this passage say about being alert, in preparation for Christ’s return?
 - What does it look like to be alert?
 - How does it describe the faithful servant?
 - What can you do to make sure you are found doing your job when Christ returns?