

The Comfort of Christ's Coming and the Day of the Lord¹

1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

May 15, 2022

DC talk: "I wish we'd all been ready".

Pretrib, Midtrib, Posttrib. I believe scripture is clear and teaches pretrib and yet I know many Godly people and others who see it a different day. I believe in the Rapture, the taking "up" of the Church.

Millions of phones will go dead, woman will turn to her husband and he won't be there, a player will make a pass and no one will receive the pass, a coworker will ask another a question, and no one will answer.

Rapture – Suddenly caught up into the heavens and being reunited with those who have gone before them with the Lord.

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴ And where I go you know, and the way you know." **John 14:1-3**

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." **1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

RAPTURE

When will this event occur? Nobody knows, and it is wrong to set dates. The fact that Paul used the pronoun we in 1 Thessalonians 4:15, 17 suggests that he expected to be alive when the Lord returned. Theologians call this the doctrine of the imminent return of Christ. Imminent means that it can happen at any moment. As Christians, we do not look for signs, nor must any special events transpire before the Lord can return. These great events will take place "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor. 15:52). When Paul preached the doctrine of the resurrection to the Athenian philosophers, most of them mocked him (Acts 17:32). To the Greeks, being rid of the body was their great hope. Why would any man want to have his body resurrected? Furthermore, how could his body be resurrected, when the elements of the body would decay and become a part of the earth? To them, the doctrine of resurrection was foolish and impossible. When Jesus Christ returns in the air, He will issue the "shout of command" and the "dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Thes. 4:16). This does not mean that He will put the elements of the body together again, for resurrection is not "reconstruction." Paul argued for the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:35ff. He pointed out that the resurrection of the human body is like the growing of a plant from a seed. The flower is not the identical seed that was planted, yet there is continuity from seed to plant. Christians shall receive glorified bodies, like the glorified body of Christ (Phil. 3:20–21; 1 Cor. 15:47–58). The dead body is the "seed" that is planted in the ground; the resurrection body is the "flower" that comes from that seed. Passages like John 5:28–29 and Revelation 20:1–6 indicate that there are two resurrections in the future. When Jesus Christ returns in the air, He will call to Himself only those who are saved through faith in Him. This is called "the first resurrection" or "the resurrection of life." At the end of time, just before God ushers in the new heaven and earth, there will be another resurrection. This is called "the second resurrection" or "the resurrection of judgment." Between these two events, I believe that the Tribulation on earth and the 1,000-year-kingdom will occur. 49 Three unique sounds will be involved in this event: The Lord's shout, the sound of the trumpet, and the voice of the archangel. Jesus Christ will give "a shout of command," just as He did outside the tomb of Lazarus (John 11:43). Those "in the graves shall hear His voice" (John 5:28). The Christian doctrine of resurrection assures us that death is not the end. The grave is not the end. The body goes to sleep, but the soul goes to be with the Lord (Phil. 1:20–24). When the Lord returns, He will bring the soul with Him, will raise the body in glory, and will unite body and soul into one being to share His glory forever. This leads us to the fourth fact that gives us comfort and assurance in the face of death. Now the word rapture is not used in this section, but that is the literal meaning of "caught up." The Latin word *rapto* means "to seize, to carry off"; and from it we get our English word "rapture." Warren Wiersbe says, "I once heard the Greek scholar, Dr. Kenneth S. Wuest, preach on this passage and explain the various meanings of the Greek word that is translated "caught up" in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. Each of these meanings adds a special truth to the doctrine of our Lord's return. "To catch away speedily." This is the translation in Acts 8:39, where the Spirit "caught away Philip" after he had led the Ethiopian to Christ. When the Lord returns in the air, we who are alive will be caught away quickly, in the twinkling of an eye. This means we should live each moment in the expectation of our Lord's return, lest He come and find us out of His will (1 John 3:1–3). "To seize by force." See John 6:15. Does this suggest that Satan and his armies will try to keep us from leaving the earth? I trust it does not suggest that some of the saints will be so attached to the world that they must literally be dragged away. Like Lot being delivered from Sodom, they will be scarcely saved (Gen. 19:16). "To claim for one's own self." This views the Rapture from our Lord's point of view as He comes to claim His bride. "To move to a new place." Paul used this word when he described his visit to heaven (2 Cor. 12:1–4). Jesus Christ has gone to prepare a home for us (John 14:1–6), and when He comes, He will take us 50 to that glorious place. We are pilgrims and strangers in this world. Our true citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20–21). "To rescue from danger." See Acts 23:10. This suggests that the church will be taken home before the time of Tribulation that will come to the world from God. First Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9 seem to state this clearly. You and I shall meet the Lord in the air, in

¹ Portion taken from David Jeremiah

person, when He comes for us. The Greek word translated “meet” carries the idea of meet- ing a royal person or an important person. We have walked with Christ by faith here on earth, but in the air we shall “see Him as He is” and become like Him (1 John 3:1–2). What a meeting that will be!²

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The Rapture Is:

A Sign Less Event – nothing else needs to happen.

Can occur at any moment.

Eminence of Christ’s return – Latin word means “to hang over one’s head.” It could happen at any time.

Some would say that the world must hear the Gospel first (every tribe/tongue), this speaks of the second coming, that I believe will usher in the 1,000-year reign.

A Surprised Event.

Harold Camping – Said that Jesus would come back three times, Sept 6, 1994, May 20, 2021, then October 21, 2011.

God was going to destroy the universe.

People lost millions of dollars and time rearranging affairs.

Before death in 2013 he repented and said in Matt 24:36, no one knows.

If you hear or read of someone who says they know when Jesus is returning, stay away. No one knows but the Lord.

A Sudden Event

In a moment and in the twinkling of an eye (1 Corinthians 15).

Doesn’t mean the blinking of an eye. Twinkling is even more sudden, twinkling is the amount of time for light travelling at 186,000 miles a second to reflect on the eye.

A Select Event

Only Believers.

A Spectacular Event

The dead in Christ will rise first and those living will be met up with Him.

Shout – His voice – Lazarus (come forth).

Trumpet – Roman army – 1st trumpet was to wake up, 2nd assembled for the day, 3rd was to march to war. Our first “trumpet” was to salvation, then to serve, and the last will be our call to home.

No matter what, we come out victorious:

Prayer Focus:

- **Am I ready?**
- **What am I doing so that others are ready?**

² Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible exposition commentary (Vol. 1, pp. 619–620). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books. 48

³ Ibid.