

Edgemont Bible Church
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1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

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Intro:

XI. What Happens to Christians When They Die?

C. The Sequence of Events at the Rapture - vs 16-17

1. For the Lord Himself - He will return for His bride unlike the gathering of the elect by the angels at the end of the tribulation – Mk 13:26-27
2. will descend from heaven
 - a. from where He has been since His ascension – Acts 1:9-11
 - b. Paul had told the Thessalonians they were waiting for his return from there – 1 Th 1:10
 - c. From where Stephen saw the Lord waiting for Him – Acts 7:56
 - d. Hebrews says that He sat down there after He purified sins – Heb 1:3
3. with a shout,
 - a. **keleuma** - a cry of incitement, a command, shout.
 - b. Jo 11:43 Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!"
 - c. Jo 5:25 "Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.
4. with the voice of an archangel,
 - a. the only archangel in Scripture is Michael – Jd 9
 - b. Jewish tradition says there are seven
 - c. whoever it is, his voice will be added to the Lord's
5. and with the trumpet of God.
 - a. 1Co 15:52 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.
 - b. Trumpets are used for many things in scripture
 - i. Israel's feasts – Nu 10:10
 - ii. celebrations – 2 Sam 6:15
 - iii. Convocations – Lev 23:24
 - iv. Sound an alarm – Nu 10:9
 - v. announcements – 1 Sam 13:3
 - vi. To gather the people – Nu 10:2
 - c. this trumpet has nothing to do with the trumpet judgments of Rev 8-11
 - d. Serves a twofold purpose
 - i. to gather God's people - Ex 19:16-19
 - ii. and signal God's deliverance of His people – Zech 1:16; 9:14-16

6. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

a. The joining of those that have died with their resurrected glorified bodies

b. the rest of Scripture about this subject will be fulfilled...e.g.

i. 1Jo 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

ii. Ro 14:8 For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

iii. Ro 8:38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,

7. Then we who are alive and remain

a. shall be caught up - **harpazo** - refers to a strong, irresistible, even violent act, to seize, catch (away, up), pluck, pull, take (by force).

i. Mt 11:12 "... kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent **take it by force**.

ii. Jo 10:12 "...and the wolf **catches** the sheep and scatters them.

iii. Jo 10:28-29 "..... neither shall anyone **snatch** them out of My hand. and no one is able to **snatch** them out of My Father's hand

iv. Ac 8:39 Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord **caught Philip away**

v. 2Co 12:2 such a one was **caught up** to the third heaven.... 4 how he was **caught up** into Paradise

b. When believers are caught up is when they will be transformed

i. Php 3:21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

ii. 1Co 15:52 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.

iii. 1 Jo 3:2b but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

c. The timing of the rapture cannot be determined by this passage, when we consider the various rapture passages comparing them to 2nd Coming or judgment passages (listed below) one may conclude that these are different events

i. Rapture Passages - Jo 14:3; Rev 3:10; 1 Co 15:51-52; Phil 3:2-21

ii. Judgement Passages - Mt 13:34-50; 24:29-44; Rev 19:11-21

d. though we have to conclude that the 2 events are separated, there is NT evidence that makes a compelling case

i. In Rev 1-3 the word church is used 19 times and then from 6-18, the church is not mentioned once indicating that the Church is not present

ii. Rev 19 does not mention a rapture even though that is where a post-tribulation rapture would logically occur - Mt 24; Lk 17 Angels gathering unbelievers at the time of 2nd coming

iii. post-tribulation rapture says God protects the Church through the tribulation

- why have a rapture, just glorify them at that point
- If you glorify all believers, there is no need of the sheep and goat judgments, they would already be separated

iv. If all saints are glorified through a post-trib. Rapture, who repopulate the earth

- all unbelievers are killed - Mt 24:40-42; Lk 17:30-37
- glorifies peoples do not procreate - Mt 22:30
- indicates that the rapture and 2nd coming have to have time between then so that more can be saved to enter the Kingdom

v. the NT does not warn of impending tribulation such as Dan 9 or Rev 6-18, it does warn of

- error and false prophets - Acts 20:29-30; 2 Pe 2:1; 1 Jo 4:1-3
- ungodly living - Eph 4:25-5:7; 1 th 4:3-8; Heb 12:1
- present tribulation - 1 Th 2:14-16; 2 th 1:4; 2 Pe

vi. If Paul were teaching a rapture after the tribulation started, one would think that the Thessalonians would

- rejoice that their loved ones were dead and escaped the terror of the tribulation
- sorrow for their impending suffering
- Also Paul would teach and encourage how to be ready for the supreme test that would come upon them

vii. A contrast of the sequence of events between the Rapture and the 2nd Coming demands a previous rapture

The rapture	the 2nd Coming
Christ comes for the elect - vs 16-17	the angels gather the elect - Mt 24:31
Resurrection is prominent - vs 15-16	no resurrection mentioned
Comes to reward believers - vs 17	Comes to judge earth - Mt 25:31-46
Snatches believers from earth - vs 15-17	takes away unbelievers - Mt 24:37-41
Unbelievers remain on earth	Believers remain on earth
No mention of established Kingdom	Sets up His Kingdom
Believers receive Glorified bodies	No one receives Glorified bodies

viii. Jesus' teachings demand pre-tribulation rapture

- Parable of the tares, tares are removed - Mt 13:24-30
- Parable of the dragnet - Mt 13:47-50
- Days of Noah/ judgment of nation - Mt 24-25

ix. Re 3:10 I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world,

- can mean keep out of—thus pre-trib
- some say can mean keep through - thus mid-trib rapture
 - misunderstands eternal security
 - misunderstands purpose of trib

b. caught up together with them - with those resurrected and glorified saints

c. in the clouds - usually associated with divine appearance - Ex 24:16;
40:34; 1 Kgs 8:10; Mt 17:5; Acts 1:9

d. to meet the Lord in the air. - Jo 14:1-3

e. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. - fulfillment of the promise

D. The Benefit of the Rapture - vs 18

1. Not to fill the gaps of our theological knowledge

2. serves to comfort the believers of Thessalonica

a. Therefore—because of what has been taught

b. We can have hope and comfort about those that have gone before us -
comfort one another with these words.