

## The Church: Raptured to be with Jesus

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

*The blessed hope of the Church is the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).*

- I. \_\_\_\_\_ can we be sure of the rapture?
  - A. The \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ (14)
  - B. The \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ (14)
  - C. The \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ (15)
- II. \_\_\_\_\_ can participate in the rapture?
  - A. Believers who are \_\_\_\_\_ (13, 15-16)
  - B. Believers who are \_\_\_\_\_ (17)
- III. \_\_\_\_\_ can we expect the rapture?
- IV. \_\_\_\_\_ can we take comfort in the rapture?

If one compares what happens at the rapture in 1 Thess 4:13-18 and 1 Cor 15:50-58 with what happens in the final events of Christ's second coming in Matthew 24-25, at least eight significant contrasts or differences are observable. These differences demand that the rapture occur at a time significantly different from that of the final event of Christ's second coming.

1. At the rapture, Christ comes in the air and returns to heaven (1 Thess 4:17), but at the final event of the second coming, Christ comes to the earth to dwell and reign (Matt 25:31-32).
2. At the rapture, Christ gathers His own (1 Thess 4:16-17), but at the final event of the second coming, angels gather the elect (Matt 24:31).
3. At the rapture, Christ comes to reward (1 Thess 4:17), but at the final event of the second coming, Christ comes to judge (Matt 25:31-46).
4. At the rapture, resurrection is prominent (1 Thess 4:15-16), but at the final event of the second coming, resurrection is not mentioned.
5. At the rapture, believers depart the earth (1 Thess 4:15-17), but at the final event of the second coming, unbelievers are taken away from the earth (Matt 24:37-41).
6. At the rapture, unbelievers remain on earth, but at the final event of the second coming, believers remain on earth (Matt 25:34).
7. At the rapture, there is no mention of establishing Christ's Kingdom on earth, but at the final event of the second coming, Christ has come to set up His Kingdom on earth (Matt 25:31, 34).
8. At the rapture, believers will receive glorified bodies (cf. 1 Cor 15:51-57), but at the final event of the second coming, no one will receive glorified bodies.