

## TRUTHS OF THE RAPTURE

**Text: I Thessalonians 4:13 – 18**

**Key Word:** Rapture

**Key Thoughts:** The Bible Unfolds Many Important Truths about the Rapture of the Church

Our Bible is full and running over with promises of encouragement related to Rapture followed by The Second Coming of Jesus Christ. It is not simply Hinted – it is HIGHLIGHTED. There are at least 300 references in the New Testament alone.

“ It’s like white on rice.”

Charles Swindoll

Jesus was the first one to introduce the Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Church in the New Testament. It was explained only to those whom He sincerely trusted. It was given on the the night before His crucifixion.

*“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told to. I’m going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”*

John 14:1 – 3

The angels in Acts 1:11 reinstated the truth 50 days later during Christ’s Ascension.

*“This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back again in the same way you had seen him go into heaven.”*

Acts 1:11

The apostle Paul encouraged Titus to look for,

*“the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ”*

Titus 2:13

## What Are the Important Truths Taught by the Bible Concerning the Rapture of the Church?

**I. A REVELATION (I Thessalonians 4:15a)**

**II. A RETURN (I Thessalonians 4:16a)**

**III. A RESURRECTION (I Thessalonians 4:16b)**

**IV. A REUNION (I Thessalonians 4:16c-17)**

**V. A REWARD (I Thessalonians 4:17b-18)**

### **I. A REVELATION (I Thessalonians 4:15a)**

*“According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you ...”*

*I Thessalonians 4:15a*

God expects us to listen when He speaks. He speaks in many ways. He speaks through signs and wonders, an audible voice, circumstances, ceremonies, laws, His inner voice, His written Word through the prophets, priests and kings as well as the apostles and disciples. Every message is to be seriously considered and obeyed. His final declaration of truth came through the witness of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle Peter told us that scoffers will come rejecting the truth of the Return of Christ. He will Return **FOR** the Church and Then will Return **WITH** the Church

*“Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.”*

*II Peter 3:4*

Peter tells us that they “*deliberately forget*” and that they will perish as all the scoffers did in Noah’s day. This next judgment will be by an unquenchable fire.

Critics have denied it. Cynics have laughed at it. Scholars have ignored it. Liberal theologians have attempted to explain it away. Fanatics have perverted it. But true believers have joyously received The Revelation of the Coming Saviour and King.

As children of God, we are not to be ignorant (II Peter 3:8; I Thessalonians 4:13) concerning the clear teaching of The Return of Christ. **We are to live like those who expect His return any day.** Don’t let this truth escape you. It has **never been completely removed** from the Church’s doctrine but it has **been hidden** during particular stages of history. This is NOT a time to forsake this truth. It is a Revelation that is important to live by every day.

## II. A RETURN (I Thessalonians 4:16a)

*“For the Lord himself will come down from heaven . . .”*

*I Thessalonians 4:16a*

The Bible emphatically states that the Lord Himself will descend. He will descend to gather His people. He knows all who are His. You and I with our 100,321 hairs on our head, 50,003 of which are now gray, and 40,300 which once were but now are no longer. He will come!

**History has never recorded such an event so it may be hard to believe.** He is not coming as a child born of a virgin this time. He will not allow Himself to be limited in strength or power. He will cause the devils to tremble. He will come to receive those who are truly His.

Many have wondered what we will see on that day. The apostle John, in his revelation of Jesus Christ, turned to see the one who spoke to him, and saw a wonderful appearance of the Son of Man.

### **Read: Revelation 1:12b–16**

This Revelation of Jesus Christ caused the apostle to fall at His feet and honour the living Christ who stood before him. Someday we will be able to stand with John and witness the fulfillment of what the famous hymn writer (Fanny Crosby) was foreseeing when she wrote . . .

### **My Savior First of All**

*“I shall know Him, I shall know Him  
As redeemed by His side I shall stand  
I shall know Him, I shall know Him  
By the print of the nails in His hands”*

Lyrics: Fanny Jane Crosby  
Music: John R. Sweney

I wonder if we we'll hear the same words that John heard on the Lord's day.

*“Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last.  
18. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I  
am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of  
death and Hades.”*

*Revelation 1:17, 18*

### III. A RESURRECTION (I Thessalonians 4:16b)

*“and the dead in Christ will rise first.”*

*I Thessalonians 4:16b*

These “*dead*” are those named in verse 13 as “*fallen asleep*.” It is used as a metaphor. A metaphor is a comparison by representation. You often find the words “*like*” or “*as*” (i.e., - James and Clephas who are like pillars, Judah is like a lion’s whelp [brat; rascal]).

Paul used the metaphor of sleeping because of:

1. The similarity between us sleeping and a dead body (restfulness and peace)
2. A sleeper does not cease to exist.
3. Sleep is temporary.
4. It is used to denote Christians only.

When our earthly tabernacle is dissolved and returns to dust, our highly complex spirit (II Corinthians 5:1) departs to be with Christ (Philippians 1:23). The early Christians adopted the Greek word “κοιμητέριον” (Greek - “*a rest house for strangers*”) to describe this place of sleeping. It was a place of internment. We have derived the English word “**cemetery**” meaning a “**sleeping place**” from it.

The resurrection of the saints is truly a time of divine hope. Christians are not to be like those who do not have hope (verse 13). The word used for “*hope*” means “*a favourable and confident expectation*.”

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is our assurance that we also will be resurrected.

“The resurrection of Jesus Christ is our hope for today. It is our assurance that we have a living Savior to help us live as we should now and that when, in the end, we set forth on our last journey, we shall not travel an uncharted course but rather we shall go on a planned voyage – life to death – to eternal living.”

Raymond MacKendree  
*“Queens Gardens”*

The prophet Zechariah declared,

*“Return to your fortress, O prisoners of hope”;*

*Zechariah 9:12*

### III. A RESURRECTION (I Thessalonians 4:16b) (Contd.)

The writer to the Hebrews encouraged us by saying,

*“Lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.”*

*Hebrews 6:18b–19*

Every Christian should have the hope of the resurrection deep within their heart. We are not to sorrow like those who have no hope. There is no need to be continually distressed, grieved or to have a heaviness of heart for believers who have gone on before us. The resurrection of Jesus Christ offers every Christian a steadfast hope that we also will be resurrected.

### IV. A REUNION (I Thessalonians 4:16c-17)

*“ . . . And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.”*

*II Thessalonians 4:16c – 17*

There is a great reunion coming for those who have been born into the family of God through salvation. It is not that all those who are dead will take part, but rather only those who are **“dead in Christ,”** those who were born again; who have had their sins forgiven.

Those who are **“alive and remain”** (verse 15) indicates only **living believers and followers of Jesus Christ.** It is specifically for those who have received a new life in Jesus Christ.

The living will not **“precede”** those who are dead in Christ. They will have a momentary advantage over us. Death is not a hindrance to God – He overcame death, and He continues to overcome it every time a believer dies.

There is coming a day when Jesus will return like a “thief in the night” (II Thessalonians 5:2) and we will be united with our Lord. The word used for **“caught up”** is the Greek word **“απαζῶ”** which means **“to snatch up or catch away.”** It indicates a sudden force. It will be much the same as that experienced by Philip recorded in Acts 8:39.

The apostle Paul (II Corinthians 12:2) and Elijah witnessed this same event while in their bodies. The day Christ comes to catch us away will be a much larger scaled event. Christians from every nation, tribe and tongue will joyously be reunited with their believing loved ones.

#### IV. A REUNION (I Thessalonians 4:16c-17) (Contd.)

\*\*\* Dr. Herschel Fort of the First Baptist Church of El Paso, Texas, told the story of a father who was lying on his deathbed. As his three sons gathered around him, the father said to the first two, who were Christians, *“Goodbye sons, I’ll see you in the morning and we will have a wonderful experience where there will be no separation again for us.”* Turning to the third son, who had never accepted Christ as his Lord and Savior, the father said with finality, *“Goodbye, son.”*

This son was greatly touched by that experience and he said to his father, *“Why did you tell me goodbye with such a finality when you said to my brothers, ‘I’ll see you again?’”*

The father said, *“Because, son, there is one thing that makes the difference in eternity, and that is faith in Jesus Christ as LORD and Savior. But you, my son, have determined in your heart not to accept Jesus Christ as your Savior. The thing that hurts me most in going out into eternity is the fact that I’ll never see you again.”*

This son began to weep, and as he wept he said, *“Father, tell me how!”* And as the father talked to his son, he said, *“If you will just exercise childlike faith in Christ, then someday our family will be complete in eternity through Christ Jesus.”*

The boy did accept Christ; and just before the father left this earth he could say to the third son, as he had to the first two, *“Goodbye, my son, I’ll see you in the morning.”* \*\*\*

#### V. A REWARD (I Thessalonians 4:17b-18)

##### A. Future Reward

*“And so we will be with the Lord forever.  
18. Therefore encourage each other with these words.”*

*II Thessalonians 4:17b – 18*

*“The entire content and worth of heaven, the entire blessedness of life eternal, is for Paul embraced in the one thought of being united with Jesus, his Savior and Lord.”*

[Bornemann](#)

## V. A REWARD (I Thessalonians 4:17b-18) (Contd.)

### A. A Future Reward (Contd.)

#### Why He Didn't Mind the Journey

\*\*\* A small boy sat quietly in his seat of the day coach on a train running between two western cities of the United States. It was a hot, dusty day, very uncomfortable for travelling, and that particular ride was perhaps the most uninteresting day's journey of the whole land. But the little fellow sat quietly watching the fields and fences hurrying by, until a motherly old lady, leading forward, asked sympathetically, "*Aren't you tired of the long ride dear, and the dust and the heat?*"

The lad looked up brightly, and replied, with a smile, "*Yes, Ma'am, a little. But I don't mind it much because my father is going to meet me when I get to the end of it.*"

What a beautiful thought it is when life seems wearisome and monotonous, as it sometimes does, we can look forward hopefully and trustingly, and like the lonely lad, not "*mind it much*" because our Father, too, will be waiting to meet us at our journey's end! \*\*\*

[Bible Expositor & Illuminator](#)

We will all face uncomfortable days. There will always be days of pain, distress, and discouragement. We can focus either on the problems or on the Saviour of our soul.

### B. A Present Reward

There are those in our midst whom we have a duty to comfort. The word used for "*comfort*" in Greek is "*παρακαλεῶ*" - in verse 18 means "*to call to one's aid*" or "*to call to one's side.*" We are to exhort, encourage and comfort one another. Oftentimes a simple gesture or a mere word or example can be received as comfort.

## V. A REWARD (I Thessalonians 4:17b-18) (Contd.)

### B. A Present Reward (Contd.)

#### Cheer Him Boys

\*\*\* There was a high-rise fire in a big city, and the fireman flung their ladders together, and went up in their brave fashion to the very top most story to rescue the people in peril. One after another was rescued by the courageous firemen. All had been rescued, it seemed when a white face appeared in an upper window. One of the firefighters wrapped himself in a cloth robe and broke through the fierce flames approaching the window. He embraced the little woman before starting down the ladder. Those on the ground looked helplessly as they noticed him trembling as the fire began to wrap around him. It seemed that he would fall with his precious cargo.

The fire chief cried out to his men: “*Cheer him, Boys! Cheer him, Boys!*” And they began to cheer him, cheer after cheer. In a heartfelt determination that gave him the strength he needed, he made it safely down the ladder. You and I need to encourage one another as we give our lives to save those who are in peril of the flames of hell. \*\*\*

George W. Truett

*“Be merciful to those who doubt;  
23. Snatch others from the fire and save them; to  
others show mercy, mixed with the fear – hating  
even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.”*

Jude 22, 23

### What Are the Important Truths Taught by the Bible Concerning the Second Coming of Jesus Christ?

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Date: Jan 06 & 13/19

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: I'll Fly Away - G; Blessed Be the Lord God Almighty - Bb

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**Key Word:** Rapture

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**INTRODUCTION:** *John 14:1 – 3; Acts 1:11; Titus 2:13*

**What Are the Important Truths Taught by the Apostle Paul Concerning the Rapture of the Church?**

**I. A REVELATION (I Thessalonians 4:15a)** - *II Peter 3:4*

**II. A RETURN (I Thessalonians 4:16a)** - *Revelation 1:12b–18*

**III. A RESURRECTION (I Thessalonians 4:16b)** - *II Corinthians 5:1; Philippians 1:23; Zechariah 9:12; Hebrews 6:18b–19*

“The resurrection of Jesus Christ is our hope for today. It is our assurance that we have a living Savior to help us live as we should now and that when, in the end, we set forth on our last journey, we shall not travel an uncharted course but rather we shall go on a planned voyage – life to death – to eternal living.”

Raymond MacKendree  
“*Queens Gardens*”

**IV. A REUNION (I Thessalonians 4:16c-17)** - *II Thessalonians 5:2; Acts 8:39; II Corinthians 12:2*

**V. A REWARD (I Thessalonians 4:17b-18)**

**A. Future Reward**

**B. A Present Reward** - *Jude 22, 23*