

No Rapture: The Second Coming of Christ & Our being "caught up together:"

The coming of Christ is one event. There is no secret-rapture, the word is not used in the Bible. At the end of time Christ will come again, we will be caught up to go with Christ, this earth will be burned up & we will go to New Heavens and a New Earth.

I Corinthians 15:24-26 Then [*cometh*] the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. 25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy [*that*] shall be destroyed [*is*] death.

Acts 2:29-29 Men [*and*] brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. 30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne.

Matthew 25:31-36 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth [*his*] sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Matthew 25:46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

I Thessalonians 4:13-14 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

John 5:21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth [*them*]; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

Those spiritually dead, as well as those in their graves. They shall hear, and the Son will bestow upon them eternal life. What the Father does the Son will do, even to the extent of giving life to the dead.

John 5:22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

John 5:25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

John 5:26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

John 5:27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

John 5:28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

John 5:29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

John 6:40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

I Thessalonians 4:13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

“But I would not have you to be ignorant ...” This was one of Paul's favorite ways of introducing a new and important subject. It is also found in Romans 1:13; Romans 11:25; 1 Corinthians 10:1; 1 Corinthians 12:1, and 2 Corinthians 1:8, in all of which, as here, the term "brethren" is used with it for the sake of conveying the idea of tenderness and affection in what he was about to say. It seems that the Thessalonian brethren, expecting the speedy coming of the Lord and they mourned over some of their family and brethren who had died, counting it a great loss that they did not live to see the second coming Jesus.

Paul did not introduce the doctrine of the resurrection as anything new, but as something they already knew and believed in. Paul assumes their faith and

argues from it. Their vivid and naive belief in Christ's second coming within their own lifetime was the very source of their distress.

“them which are asleep ...” What we call death is only falling asleep in the arms of Jesus. This beloved metaphor was frequently used by our Lord himself, as in the instances of Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:39) and of Lazarus (John 11:11), and quickly adopted wherever Christianity was known. The very word "cemetery," "[Koi-meter-ion], is derived from the word used here, [koi-mao], and means `a place of sleep

“...that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.” This thought concerns the hopeless state of the Gentile world. The darkness and despair which had fallen upon the Gentile nations due to their rejection of God and their following fall into debauchery that followed was total. The belief held generally by the Greeks was that there was no resurrection, that death, tararatus, hades and the grave was the end of all things.

I Thessalonians 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

If we believe ... “ If we believe in the death and resurrection of Christ, we must believe also that all who sleep in Him will be raised up.

“... even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” The glorious promises of this passage are for them that sleep in Jesus." Thus, again, the supreme importance of being in Christ" appears as a mandatory prerequisite of receiving any Christian blessing. The apostle John wrote: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord (Revelation 14:13); and the same teaching is in Paul's words here.

“... even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him ...”

Jude 14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,

This is what Enoch, inspired of God, told the people of his day. He warned them of a general judgment, when the Lord would come. He assured them that the Lord would come, accompanied by ten thousands of his saints; or, as the Syriac has it, `with myriads of his saints or Holy Ones.

John 6:40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

I Thessalonians 4:15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive [*and*] remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

“For this we say ...” He now explains how it will be at the Lord's coming.

“... by the word of the Lord ... The most natural explanation of this is that Paul is quoting a saying of Jesus, and it is not revealed whether it was conveyed to the apostle personally by the Lord or by some other apostle. There were countless sayings of Jesus that were not preserved for posterity (John 21:25).

“We which are alive ...” We who are on the earth when the Lord comes,

“... shall not prevent them which are asleep.” The old English word “prevent” means proceed or go first; we will not go before those who died in the Lord to meet Him. This answered the question that was troubling the Thessalonians. There is no disadvantage to those who die before the coming of the Lord; as a matter of fact, having already undergone the necessary change that must come to all, they are a step nearer the resurrection and shall therefore “rise first” as Paul would say a moment later. Here it is presented negatively. The living shall not precede the dead saints in receiving the glory the Lord has prepared for them.

I Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven ...” they seemed to have thought that the living saints would hurry to meet the Lord, and that the dead would be powerless to follow. On the contrary, Christ comes to them. He will descend from heaven.

“...with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God ...” Jesus cried “with a loud voice” over the grave of Lazarus (John 11:43); and, in the light of this verse before us, there must be some significance in it. The shout is here identified with the voice of the archangel and the sound of a trumpet; and evidently some fantastically penetrating sound will signal the onset of the

Second Coming. Such sounds attended the giving of the Law of Moses on Mt. Sinai;

Exodus 19:16-19 And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that [*was*] in the camp trembled. 17 And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. 18 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. 19 And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.

I Thessalonians 4:17 Then we which are alive [*and*] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

“We which are alive and remain ...” Christians who are on the earth when the Lord comes, will not precede those who died in the Lord to meet Him.

“...shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air ...” Caught up in the clouds ... "The Greek word for `caught up' is rendered as "rapture" in the Vulgate and other Latin versions. This event has since 1831 been called `the rapture. Sorry “Left Behind” fans there is no such thing as some pre-millennium rapture. This doctrine began with a preacher: John Darby and the Plymouth Brethren and has spread like tares among the Baptist, Pentecostals and all other pre-mil's ever since.

Who is does the word “... them ...” in verse 17 mean? When we are “... caught up together with them ...” who does the word “them” mean? “Them in verse 17 is an antecedent referring back to the nearest noun in verse 16 which says: “...the dead in Christ shall rise first:” So “them” means the “dead in Christ” who have been raised first. When does the resurrection happen? “... at the last day” not 7 years before folks. “Prove it Preacher” OK:

John 6:40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

The resurrection is: “ ... at the last day” Not 7 years before some tribulation.

To be fit for this resurrection, first our earthly bodies must be changed and become fit for the celestial, immortal and incorruptible as we studied last week.

I Corinthians 15:50-52, Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew 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 trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

I Thessalonians 4:18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words

Cheer each other with these assurances. Tell the mourning ones that when they are called to meet the Lord they will find their own sleeping ones in His glorious company.

A letter dated from the pagan era of the first century, which reads:

[Eire-ne] (Peace) to Ta-onno-phris and [Fi-lon], Good cheer. I was as grieved and wept as much over Eu-mo-iros as over Di-dy-mas, and I did all that was fitting, as did all my family ... But still we can do nothing in such a case. So comfort yourselves. Goodbye.

How hopeless is such a letter! And what a world of difference in the pagan "comfort yourselves" and the glowing words of Christian faith, "comfort one another with these words!"

Not only did the words of this passage allay the weeping, dry the tears and comfort the bereaved in Thessalonica, they are still doing so after some 2,000 years have rolled away;

I Thessalonians 5: 1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

This chapter continues, significantly, the teaching on the Second Advent, but with a difference of purpose. Whereas in 1 Thessalonians 4 the purpose was reassurance with reference to deceased Christians, in this it is rather an admonition to be ready for the event when it occurs

I Thessalonians 5:1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

I Thessalonians 5: 2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

Paul here meant that he and Silas and Timothy had fully and carefully instructed them on these things at the time of their conversion.

“Day of the Lord so cometh ...” “In the Greek, there is no definite article before either ‘day’ or ‘Lord,’ indicating that the expression was stereo-typed, having become somewhat as a proper noun.” The expression was used extensively in the Old Testament; and Barclay summarized the Old Testament meaning of the expression thus:

(1) It would come suddenly and unexpected, (2) it would involve a cosmic upheaval in which the universe would be shaken to its very foundations, and (3) it would be a time when God would bring judgment upon the nations.

The adoption, from the very beginning of Christianity, of this same expression, used in the sense of the day of Jesus Christ, shows how universally the early church accepted Jesus as co-equal with God. The day of the Lord here means not just the destruction of Jerusalem, nor only the day of one's death, but the day of the Lord's advent or second Coming.

Matt 24:42-44 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.⁴³ But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.⁴⁴ Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

I Thessalonians 5:3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

“... For when they shall say ...” has the equivalent meaning of “When people are saying.” Primarily, it is the non-Christian portion of humanity in view, because the thrust of this warning is so that Christians may not find themselves surprised by the Lord's coming. As Moffatt expressed it:

While the Day comes suddenly to Christians and unbelievers alike, only the latter are surprised by it. Christians are on the alert, open-eyed; they do not know when it is to come, but they are alive and their eyes are wide open to any signs of its coming.

“...Peace and safety ...“ At the precise moment when humanity feels most secure in their rebellious and sinful course against God, and at a time when all of the devices of government and society may have produced the environment in which man may fancy that the peace, prosperity and safety of the whole world have been secured - precisely then shall the Lord descend from heaven with a shout, the voice of the archangel and the trump of God!

Travail upon a woman with child ... A very apt simile is this; for, as Ward noted, "The sudden pain of labor, even when it is expected (and a woman expects labor just as a Christian expects the second coming [parousia]), it is sudden when it comes

I Thessalonians 5:4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

Darkness is used here as antithetical to light, and very similarly to the writings of John; these passages refer not to literal darkness and light, but to the state of rebellion against God (darkness) and to the state of obedience (light).

But ye members of the church, living in the light, expecting the coming of your Lord (Matthew 25:10) cannot be surprised. Your knowledge and faith lead you to be always ready

I Thessalonians 5:5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

These Johannine metaphors were known and used by all of the apostles. The uses of "sons" or "children" in such a metaphor "indicate close connection or a resemblance, and are a Hebrew idiom." Thus, 'Son of God' identified Jesus Christ as having the same nature of God and as existing on an equality with God.

“Children of the day ...” means nearly the same as "sons of light," except, as Morris said, "It refers back to 'the day of the Lord,' with all that that means in terms of participation in the triumph of that great day."

Note too that Paul first stated the positive truth of their being sons of light, and sons of day, and then in the negative opposites of being not of the night or of darkness.

I Thessalonians 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as [*do*] others; but let us watch and be sober.

I Thessalonians 5:7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

I Thessalonians 5:8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

I Thessalonians 5:9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

I Thessalonians 5:10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

I Thessalonians 5:11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

Sources: KJV Bible, theWord.com, B.W. Johnson's Peoples New Testament Commentary and Coffman's Commentary.