

# **The Rapture**

**3-19-23**

1 Thessalonians 4:17 (ESV)

Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

**This statement refers to the catching up into the air of those Christians who are living when Jesus returns. This is commonly called The Rapture. The reason this statement comes up is because Paul feels it is necessary to address the concerns about Christians who had previously died. We see this in Paul's opening statement.**

1 Thessalonians 4:13 (ESV)

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

**Paul does not want us uninformed about Christians who have died or metaphorically sleep. The word sleep is used in lieu of death because of death's "temporary" nature for Christians. This is especially appropriate for Christians because of our assured resurrection. Paul viewed those "who sleep" as continuing their relationship with Christ in Heaven while their bodies were in the grave. Sleep refers to the physical body, not our spirit and soul. Death is not some unconscious repose, but shedding the body and being with Christ.**

**Paul said in Phil.1:23, “My desire is to depart and be with Christ.” Jesus said to the thief on the cross, in Luke 23:43, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.” The believer’s death or sleep is closely connected to Christ’s death, resurrection, and ultimate return.**

**1 Thessalonians 4:14 (ESV)**

For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep.

**Jesus died physically and by taking on our sin was separated from God. True and complete sacrificial death. By Jesus dying in our place, we only suffer bodily sleep while our spirit and soul continues in relationship with Christ in Heaven. Those who have died before us will return to earth with Jesus.**

**1 Thessalonians 4:15 (ESV)**

For this we declare to you by a **WORD FROM THE LORD**, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

**If Jesus returns today while we are alive on this earth, the Christians who have already died will received their glorified bodies before “we” are caught up to meet Jesus in the air. Paul declares specifically this is THE WORD FROM THE LORD.**

**This will be a visible worldwide event.**

1 Thessalonians 4:16 (ESV)

For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

**With absolute authority Jesus HIMSELF will come down and give the command to raise the bodies of all dead in Christ. The dead bodies of the saints will be raised first before anything else occurs. They then will be the main participants in the first acts of Jesus after HIS return. Now to the living!**

1 Thessalonians 4:17 (ESV)

Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

**THEN and only then! We who are alive, who are left, will be caught up! Caught up means suddenly snatched up with force. The Latin term for “caught up” is “raptus” from where we get the word Rapture! In 1Corinthians, 15:51-52, Paul describes this mystery and compares the suddenness of the Rapture to the blinking of an eye.**

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 (ESV)

Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

**When Jesus returns, those Christians still alive will undergo immediate change from mortality to immortality never to experience death. In the Rapture, those believers still living on earth, will be suddenly and immediately caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.**

**This WORD FROM THE JESUS should encourage us and be repeated and used to encourage every believer.**

1 Thessalonians 4:18 (ESV)

Therefore encourage one another with these words.

**The Rapture, being caught up at Jesus' return should bring perspective and confidence. In 1Corinthians 15 after discussing Jesus' return and being caught up in the twinkling of an eye, Paul challenges each of us.**

1 Corinthians 15:58 (ESV)

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

**We shall not all sleep but we all shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Encourage one another with these words.**