

Comfort for the Living

The Triumphant Church / 1 Thessalonians 4:17–18

Seeing these signs played out in the news, on television, over the Internet, and even in our own lives can cause despair, anxiety, and confusion—not just because of the world situation but also over our concern for those who do not know the Lord and could be “left behind” to face the Tribulation. But when Jesus told us to open our eyes, He did so to encourage us to gaze upon Him—not because this will cause all the world’s problems (and ours) to disappear, but because He is the Prince of Peace.”
(Jeremiah, David. The Book of Signs p. XII)

I. Raptured Together

1 Thessalonians 4:17

A. For all Believers

All Christians will simultaneously be caught up or Raptured to meet the Lord in the Air.

There are some that espouse a Partial Rapture theory. This theory rests on Luke 21:36.

Luke 21:36 KJV 1900

Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things

that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

This position is based on a misunderstanding of the value of the death of Christ as it frees the sinner from condemnation and renders him acceptable to God.

B. At Any Time

Any position on the second coming of Christ that takes the edge off our expectancy and intrudes all kinds of prior events between the believer and the Rapture is a wrong position.

Matthew 24:44 KJV 1900

Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

Matthew 24:36 KJV 1900

But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

Mark 13:33 KJV 1900

Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

Matthew 24:43 KJV 1900

But know this, that if the goodman 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.

Mark 13:35 KJV 1900

Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:

Luke 21:36 KJV 1900

Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

So then, in contrast with the actual return of the Lord to set up His kingdom on earth, which *is* a dated event (seven years after the signing of the Antichrist's treaty with Israel and 1,260 days after the breaking of the treaty.

Daniel 9:26–27 KJV 1900

And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and

for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Harrison states, "Let us get clearly in mind the nature of the Tribulation, that it is divine "wrath" and divine "judgment". We know that our blessed Lord bore for us the wrath of God and His judgment; therefore we who are in Him "shall not come into judgment." the antithesis of 1 Thessalonians 5:9 is conclusive evidence.

1 Thessalonians 5:9 KJV 1900

For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

Luke 12:38 KJV 1900

And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* so, blessed are those servants.

The Lord could have come at any moment in the past two thousand years. He could come at any moment now.

II. Rejoicing Together

1 Thessalonians 4:17b-18

A. Rejoice in the Rapture

Caught up! The word is *harpazō*. It means literally “to snatch away.”

Acts 8:39 KJV 1900

And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

2 Corinthians 12:2 KJV 1900

I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.

Jude 23 KJV 1900

and others save with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

Matthew 13:19 KJV 1900

When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked *one*, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

In like manner, we are going to be snatched away before the end-times judgments fall upon this planet.

B. Rejoice In the Resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:35-54

Philippians 3:21 KJV 1900

Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

1 John 3:2 KJV 1900

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Conclusion

2 Peter 1:4 KJV 1900

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

That is why Jesus said to the cultured, successful, religious Nicodemus, “Ye must be born again” (John 3:7).

For it is by means of the new birth that we are regenerated, that we are “born from above,” that we receive the Holy Spirit and the very nature of Christ.