

THIS IS "HOW" & "WHEN" CHRISTIANS WILL BE RESURRECTED

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

You've probably noticed as we've made our way through 1 Thessalonians the number of times the Apostle Paul refers to the future (1:9-10; 2:19; 3:13).

In the time Paul had with the Thessalonian believers it appears he taught quite a bit on end times. He certainly taught that Jesus was coming again and very possibly in their lifetime. When Timothy returned from Thessalonica, he came with questions from the Thessalonian believers. It appears that a few believers in the Thessalonian church family had died.

Since Jesus had not yet returned, did that mean those who died would _____ on events associated with the coming of Jesus?

The Apostle Paul answers this question in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

1 Thessalonians 4:13 For some reason, Paul did not cover what happens to Christians who die before Jesus comes for the Church. Those who are *asleep* are believers who have died. Paul is not teaching *soul sleep*; he is using a figure of speech called a euphemism/metaphor which is a gentler way of saying a hard thing. But it's a great metaphor because a person who is asleep is still very much alive. What Paul shares next gives hope in the midst of the grief we feel at the death of a loved one in Christ.

1 Thessalonians 4:14 The literal, physical death and resurrection of Jesus are the grounds of our faith that we, too, will be literally, physically resurrected from the dead. What God the Father did for Jesus, He will do for us. But as Paul explains, our resurrection will be accomplished in a very unique way; the phrase "even so" would be better translated, "in this way" i.e. in this way God will resurrect Church-age believers.

First, God the Father will send the souls of all church-age believers with Jesus from the 3rd heaven to the earth's atmosphere. Remember, at the moment of physical death a believer's soul goes to be with Jesus: "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:1-10).

1 Thessalonians 4:15 The manner by which God will resurrect Church-age believers was revealed to the Apostle Paul by direct revelation from Jesus Himself. Jesus revealed there will be a sequence to the resurrection; the dead in Christ will be resurrected and gathered to Jesus first followed by those Christians living at the time of the Rapture.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 As we saw in verse 14, Jesus will descend from heaven having with Him the souls of all Church-age believers who have died prior to this event. As Jesus descends, He will cry out a command that will be repeated by an archangel (a ruling angel) and accompanied by a trumpet call, all of which depicts an ancient military operation. Jesus will be invading Satan's territory and gathering out His Bride, the Church.

The sequence will be the resurrection and gathering of the dead in Christ followed by the translation and gathering of the living to meet the Lord Jesus in the air to be with Him forever.

It can't get much better than that.

¹⁸ *Therefore encourage one another with these words.*

To many, even believers, this sounds like a fairytale. And it would be if it were not for one historical fact: Jesus of Nazareth rose from the dead on Sunday, April 5th, 33 A.D. On that day alone Jesus was seen alive by at least 15 eyewitnesses. The resurrected Jesus spent forty days with the disciples before ascending to heaven on Thursday, May 14th, 33 A.D. At one point during those forty days the resurrected Jesus was seen by over 500 hundred men at one gathering. Saul, the archenemy of Jesus and persecutor of the Church encountered the resurrected Jesus, and was miraculously transformed and as the Apostle Paul was used of God to spread the story of the resurrected Jesus throughout the Roman Empire.

Because of the literal, physical resurrection of Jesus we are comforted on behalf of our loved ones who have preceded us to glory and we are challenged to live our lives in the light of the Rapture which could happen at any moment.

Even so, come Lord Jesus!

GRACE NEWS AND NEEDS

Women's Day Retreat to Pine Valley: Saturday, March 9th. \$85. Sign up on patio.

Roger Boysel Memorial, Sunday, March 10th, 2:00PM.

Junior High / High School Summer Camp Signups.

Men's Horseshoe Tournament, Sunday, March 17th, 12Noon, Signup on Patio.

Blood Drive, Friday, March 22nd, 12:30PM-6:30PM, Modular.

VOM Needs for March: *Dental Floss*

YTD Giving -14,037 below the 2024 combined weekly need of \$114,554.

Overview of the Future as Revealed in the Bible

3rd Heaven – Dwelling Place of God

