

RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH (Part One)

In our lesson text, Paul introduced the Rapture of Church. We will study three parts to the Rapture of the Church from our lesson text over the next three studies.

Remember that during our introduction to the Book of Thessalonians, we told you that each chapter of this book ends with an eschatology doctrinal principle. This lesson text is the longest of them all.

We will study five aspects of Rapture of Church (part one).

1. Paul opened our lesson text with three reasons for writing this lengthy doctrine on the Rapture of the church in 1 Thess.4:13 and 18.

- **1st reason** - “**We do not want** (ouk thelo/ p.a.ind 1pl) **you to be uniformed** [ignorant] (agnoeo/ p.a.infin) brethren.” (1 Thess.4:13a)
- **2nd reason** - “About those who are asleep (ton koimao) [deceased church age believers], **so that (hina/ divine purpose) you** (living church age believers) **will not grieve (me lupeo/ p.p.subj)** as (kathos/ adv) do the rest (hoi loipos/ nplm/ unbelievers) who have no hope (hoi echo/ p.a.ptc.nplm).” (1 Thess.4:13b)
- **3rd reason** - “Therefore (hoste/ conj.plus impv) [strong conclusion] **comfort** (parKaleo/ p.m.impv.2pl) one another with (en+inst. of means) **these words** (tois logos/ ist.pl.m).” (1 Thess.4:18)

(Eph.2:12) “Remember you were at that time (Gentile unbeliever) separated from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and stranger to the covenant of promise, having no hope without God in the world.”

2. The term “asleep” (koimao) (1 Thess.4:13-15; 1 Cor.15:6, 18; 2 Pet.3:4) is a theological reference to the believer’s body, and not to his human soul or spirit (1 Thess.5:23) [trichotomy].

At death, the body goes back to the dust from which it came (Gen.2:7; 3:19; Eccl.12:7); and the soul and spirit return to the Father who gave them (Job 34:14-15).

The souls of the old covenant believers went to Sheol, to Paradise, Abraham’s bosom, to await the First the Resurrection beginning with Jesus Christ [First Fruits of Resurrection] (1 Cor.15:20-23; 1 Thess.4:13-18; Rev.20:4-6) [the dead in Christ] (1 Thess.4:16).

3. Church Age gospel plays an important theological role in Paul’s discussion of Rapture of Church in (1 Thess.4:13-18).

(1 Thess.4:14) “**For if** (1cc) [if true in protasis, also true in apodosis] **we believe (pisteuo/ p.a.ind.1pl) that** (hoti/ declarative) Jesus died and rose again, even so, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in (dia+abl.of agent) Jesus.”

Dia+ablative of agent refers to the mechanics of the gospel of Jesus to those who believe that He died for our sins, was buried, and raised from the dead on the third day (1 Cor15:3-4; Rom.1:16; Eph.2:8-9).

This is the Jesus who will return with those Church Age Believers who “have fallen asleep in Jesus” (1 Thess.4:13-15) and “those who are dead in Christ” (1 Thess.4:16; 2 Cor.5:6-8; John 14:1-6).

4. In (1Thess. 4:15-16), Paul revealed a doctrinal principle regarding the order of the First Resurrection (Rev.20:4-6) (of believers).

(1 Thess.4:15) “For this we say to you by the word of the Lord (**special revelation**), that (hoti/ declarative/ doctrinal principle) **we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen** asleep.”

The Church Age ORDER of resurrection bodies: Jesus Christ; deceased Church Age Believers; and then Church Age Believers “who are alive and remain.”

(1 Thess.4:16) “The dead in Christ **shall rise first** (protos).” (and receive resurrection body)

(1 Cor.15:6) “After that He appeared to more than 500 brethren at one time, **most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep.**”

5. Rapture of Church will be the DAY of “Surpassing Greatness of Revelation” for every Church Age Believer as well as for the world (1 Cor.15:51) (read).

(2 Cor.12:2) “I know a man in Christ who 14 years ago - whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows - such a man was caught up to the third heaven.”

(2 Cor.12:4) “**Was caught up into Paradise** and heard **inexpressible words**, which a man is not permitted to speak.” (Luke 23:43)

(2 Cor.12:7-8) “Because of the **surpassing greatness of the revelation**, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me - to keep me from exalting myself. And he said to me, “**My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.**”

(1 Thess.4:17-18) “**Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the cloud to meet the Lord in the air (Acts 1:9-11), and so we shall always be with the Him.** Therefore comfort one another with these words.”