

The Reality of the Rapture

I Thess 4:13-18

¹³ But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Introduction

Review:

- * We have already looked at whether the Rapture is Biblical
- * We have spent a couple of Sundays discussing the Reason for the Rapture in which we learned

It is not

1. Dispensation separatism
2. Persecution

But is

The Day of the Lord which starts

1. not at the beginning of the 7 yr period
2. but after the revelation of the Antichrist and the falling away.

3 The Day of the Lord is the Wrath of God which we have the promise of deliverance from

Lesson**I. The Comfort of the Rapture**

¹³ But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

will bring

agó: to lead, bring, carry

Original Word: ἄγω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: agó

Phonetic Spelling: (ag'-o)

Short Definition: I lead

Definition: I lead, lead away, bring (a person, or animal), guide, spend a day, go.

II. The Confession of the Rapture

¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again,

For (gar) explains the two foundational truths (of the Gospel) that counteract the inordinate grief that (justifiably) characterizes unbelievers. Paul is explaining why his readers do not need to grieve for dead believers in the same way as the unsaved world grieves the loss of their loved ones and friends.

If (1487) does not imply uncertainty and is not a suggestion the Thessalonians (and Paul = "we") might not believe these foundational truths but to the contrary assumes the condition (i.e., it is a condition of reality) is that they actually do believe. It could be translated "*For since we believe*".

So the hope we have as an anchor of our soul (see note [Hebrews 6:19](#)) is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The certainty of the past, historical resurrection of Jesus is the basis for our confidence in the future resurrection of believers.

Hiebert adds that...

The **we** is inclusive, both writers and readers; **we as Christians** accept Christ's death and resurrection as the great major premise of the Christian faith. They are the sure foundation of Christian hope. The two facts must be kept together. St. Paul bases his Gospel not on the Cross taken in isolation, but on the Cross as followed by and interpreted by the Resurrection. (Ibid)

Believe (4100) (**pisteuo** from **pistis**; **pistos**) means to consider something to be true and therefore worthy of one's trust. To

accept as true, genuine, or real. To have a firm conviction as to the goodness, efficacy, or ability of something or someone in this case the Gospel of Jesus Christ. (See related study on the [obedience of faith](#))

Died (599) (**apothnesko** from **apo** = intensifies meaning of verb or conveys sense of away from + **thnesko** = die means literally to die off) means to die a natural death, applied to both men and animals. It literally means to cease to have vital functions. Applied to Christ **apothnesko** means to die for or on account of sin and so to make atonement for sin. **Apothnesko** as used here does not refer to a figurative death but to the literal, historical death of Christ which has eternal spiritual ramifications. Death was not final for Christ, and neither will it be for believers. Note that Paul does not say Jesus **slept** but uses the harsher word **apothnesko** - He **died**. Christians can enjoy peaceful *sleep* because Jesus became a curse for us and endured death as the penalty.

Hiebert adds that Paul's declaration that "He died" rather than "He slept" signifies that Jesus... experienced death, the result of sin, in all its grim horror. But His death brought the death of death; in dying as our sin-bearer He transformed death for believers into sleep with a future awakening. (Ibid)

MacArthur explains that...

Jesus experienced the full fury of death in all its dimensions as He "bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness" ([1Pe 2:24-note](#)). His death transformed death into sleep for believers. T. E. Wilson notes "Death has been changed to sleep by the work of Christ. It is an apt metaphor in which the whole concept of death is transformed. 'Christ made it the name for death in the dialect of the church ([Acts 7:60](#) - Stephen being stoned "fell asleep".) (Findlay)' " (What the Bible Teaches: 1 and 2 Thessalonians [Kilmarnock, Scotland: John Ritchie Ltd., 1983], 45).

When believers die, their spirit goes immediately into conscious fellowship with the Lord, while their bodies temporarily sleep in the grave, awaiting the Rapture. (Ibid)

Rose again (450) (**anistemi** from **ana** = up, again + **histemi** = stand) (see related word study **anastasis = Resurrection**) literally means to stand again, to stand up, arise, lift up, be raised up, rise (again), to stand upright again. In context **rose again** refers to the resurrection of Christ from the dead, the climactic event that demonstrated His victory over sin and death and the foundation stone of the Gospel of our salvation (see **notes** on His death, burial and resurrection - [1Co 15:3](#), [4 notes](#))

No longer must the mourners weep
And call departed Christians dead;
For death is hallowed into sleep,
And every grave becomes a bed.

Now once more, Eden's door
Open stands to mortal eyes!
Now at last, old things past,
Christ is risen! We too shall rise.
-- J. Sidlow Baxter

IS THE **RESURRECTION** OF THE DEAD TAUGHT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT?

The concept of the **resurrection of the dead** although not made effective until the resurrection of Christ, the "First fruits" ([1Cor 15:20](#) "*now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep*"), was clearly alluded to in the Old Testament. (see [Christ the First Fruits](#))
Job (the oldest book in the Bible) testifies ...

And as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God Whom I myself shall behold, and Whom my eyes shall see and not another. My heart faints within me. ([Job 19:25, 26, 27](#))

While Job's declaration does not definitively foretell a physical resurrection, a number of conservative commentators agree that Job is alluding to that event. (See comments regarding the resurrection implications of [Job 19:25-27](#) in Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., et al: The Bible Knowledge Commentary. 1985. Victor or Logos)

Isaiah issues a prophecy that applies to corporate redeemed Israel (only those Jews who believe in Messiah, cf the concept of the **remnant**) that...

Your dead will live. Their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, For your dew is as the dew of the dawn, and the earth will give birth to the departed spirits. ([Isaiah 26:19](#))

Comment: Dr Ryrie in [The Ryrie Study Bible](#) writes that

"This verse, along with [Job 19:26](#) and [Da 12:2](#), explicitly teaches the bodily resurrection of OT believers."

Finally **Daniel** unambiguously affirms a belief in an individual future resurrection of the "living (believers = everlasting life) and the dead (unbelievers = everlasting contempt)" writing that...

many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. ([Daniel 12:2](#))

Comment: This verse predicts 2 resurrections which parallels Jesus' prophecy in [John 5:28, 29](#), but in neither it 1000 year interval between the "first" and "second" resurrection mentioned.

See study of [The Two Resurrections](#)

One other point is worth noting in support of the fact that the resurrection was taught in the Old Testament. The writer of Hebrews tells us that Abraham believed in the resurrection writing that...

He (Abraham) considered ([logizomai](#) = thought about this truth in a detailed and logical manner = bookkeeping term = Abraham "made an entry" in his "spiritual ledger" so that he would have a permanent record that could be consulted whenever needed! [Are you doing the same with the precious and magnificent promises of God, beloved?](#)) that God is able ([dunatos](#) = has the inherent ability to perform what He promises) to raise men even from the dead; from which he also received him (Isaac, the son whom he loved, Genesis 22) back as a type ([parabole](#) = illustration thrown alongside truth to make latter easier to understand). (See note [Hebrews 11:16](#))

III. The Character of the Rapture

A. The Priority

B. The Procedure

¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord

Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

The Priority

¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

This I say to you by the Word of the Lord - With the phrase "by (literally **in**) the Word of the Lord" Paul introduces not only a new subject but also new revelation he had received from the Lord. This is not Paul's idea but comes from and with the authority of the Lord Who gives us one of the most detailed accounts of His return for His Bride, the Church. The Lord is the Source of this truth. The Word of the Lord is a Word of promise. Believe it and be blessed.

Remain Pres Pass Participle (perileipo from **perí** = intensifies meaning of the verb + **leípo** = to leave, lack) means to leave over, to leave all around, (pass.) survive. In Classic Greek the **passive voice** referred to those who survived and therefore remained or were **left behind**, the title of a famous novel series! Unlike the book and movie "Left Behind" (which describes unbelievers who "miss" the Rapture), here Paul uses the idea of left behind to describe the ones who will "remain over," or "survive" unto the parousia (cf. [1Th 2:19-note](#)). This is the generation of Christians who will be alive at that time and who will never experience physical death.

perileipomai: to be left remaining

Original Word: περιλείπω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: perileipomai

Phonetic Spelling: (per-ee-li'-po)

Short Definition: I leave behind

Definition: I leave behind; pass: I am left behind, remain, survive.

Matt 24:9-13

⁹ “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. ¹⁰ And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. ¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But he who endures to the end shall be saved

v.21-22

²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²² And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.

Coming of the Lord

Parousia conveys the thought of an arrival (advent or coming) of a person to a place plus the idea of their presence at that place until a certain event transpires. The word **parousia** has no English equivalent and therefore is often transliterated in writings.

John MacArthur writes that...

Parousia refers to more than just coming; it includes the idea of “**presence**.” Perhaps the best English translation would be “**arrival**.” The church’s great hope is the arrival of Jesus Christ when He comes to bless His people with His presence. That

glorious truth appears in more than 500 verses throughout the Bible. (Macarthur J. James. Moody **or** Logos) (Bolding added)

Parousia is used 24 times in the NT (and none in the non-apocryphal Septuagint) ([Mt 24:3](#), [27](#), [37](#), [39](#); [1Co 15:23](#); [16:17](#); [2Co. 7:6](#), [7](#); [10:10](#); [Phil. 1:26](#); [2:12](#); [1Th 2:19](#); [3:13](#); [4:15](#); [5:23](#); [2Th 2:1](#), [8](#), [9](#); [Jas 5:7](#), [8](#); [2Pe 1:16](#); [3:4](#), [12](#); [1 Jn. 2:28](#)) and is translated **coming** 22 times and **presence** twice.

In an ancient Greek letter a lady speaks of the necessity of her **parousia** in a place in order to attend to matters relating to her property there. Moulton and Milligan have these secular quotes...
the repair of what has been swept away by the river
requires my **presence**

“we await your **presence**,” (a man to his “brothers)

it is no use if a person comes too late for what required his
presence

In another secular Greek writing we find **parousia** used to refer to the coming of a king or other noted official (see note below). In the visit of the ruler was accompanied by magnificent ceremonies, delicacies to eat, gifts of money, street improvements, new buildings, addressing of complaints and requests! Sounds like the coming of the King to take His throne in the 1000 year **Millennial** or Messianic Kingdom!

SHALL NOT PRECEDE THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP: ou me phthasomen (1PAAS) tous koimethentas; (APPMPA): ([Job 41:11](#); [Psalms 88:13](#); [119:147,148](#); [Matthew 17:25](#))

Not (ou me) is actually a double negative, so that Paul is saying in essence that there is absolutely no way those who are alive will precede those who have died. The revelation that the living believers will not have any advantage over the dead believers at the return of Christ provides the truth that should make any further feeling of grieving for dead believers wholly unjustified. Paul is

teaching that both classes of believers at the Lord's return will share the same destiny at the same time.

Precede (5348)(**phthano**) means go before in time, to be beforehand or go prior to. The idea is to antedate another, which is primary meaning in this verse. **Phthano** in other contexts means to reach, to attain or to arrive at, as one would arrive at a state or a goal ([Ro 9:31-note](#), [Php 3:16-note](#)).

The Procedure

For the Lord Himself - He will send not emissaries, envoys, or angels but will come Himself as the Bridegroom for His Bride.

Descend (2597) (**katabaino** from **katá** = down + **baíno** = to walk, to go or to come) means to come or go down and so to descend from a higher to a lower place. It means to move downward. Figuratively it can mean to be brought down ([Mt 11:23](#), [Lk 10:15](#)). In this verse it describes descent from heaven.

Katabaino describes God descending to afford aid to the oppressed in Acts...

I have certainly seen the oppression of My people in Egypt, and have heard their groans, and I have **come down** to deliver them; come now, and I will send you to Egypt.' ([Acts 7:34](#) from [Ex. 3:8](#))

Hiebert notes that there are

Three prepositional phrases, standing before the verb in the original (**Ed note**: the verb **katabaino** or **descend**

follows the 3 phrase below in the original Greek), describe the accompanying circumstances at the Lord's descent, "**with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God.**" "**With**" in each phrase represents the preposition **en**, "in, in connection with," denoting the attendant circumstance. (Ibid)

1. **Shout** (**keleusma** from **keleúo** = to command or order from **kello** = to urge on) (Only used here in the NT) refers to a shout of command or an order.

Thayer adds that **keleusma** was used of a stimulating cry, either that by which animals are roused and urged on by man, as horses by charioteers, hounds by hunters, etc., or that by which a signal is given to men, e. g. to rowers by the master of a ship (Lucian), to soldiers by a commander (Thucydides)

TDNT adds that...

With a basic sense of "what is impelled," **keleusma** has such meanings as "command," "summons," "cry of encouragement," and "cry." In ordinary speech it tends to be replaced by **keleusis**, which becomes a technical term for a government decree. (Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans)

- 2 **WITH THE VOICE OF...ARCHANGEL: en phone archaggelou:** ([Jude 1:9](#))

Voice (5456)(**phone** from **pháo** = to shine from the idea

of disclosure) is literally a sound or tone made or given forth. Plutarch calls it "that which brings light upon that which is thought of in the mind."

Archangel (743) (**archaggelos** from **árchon** = chief + **ággelos** = angel, envoy, messenger, one who is sent) refers to the first or highest angel, the archangel, leader of the angels. In the celestial hierarchy, an archangel would describe a spiritual being in rank above an angel.

In the celestial hierarchy, an **archangel** would describe a spiritual being in rank above an angel. Several New Testament passages imply a distinct hierarchy in the spirit world ([Ep 1:21-note](#); [Ep 6:12-note](#); [Col 2:10-note](#); [1Pe 3:22-note](#))

The only other use of **archaggelos** is in Jude (not in the LXX) who records that...

But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you. ([Jude 1:9](#))

In the book of Daniel, **Michael** is mentioned 3 times...

But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, **Michael, one of the chief princes**, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. ([Da 10:13](#))

However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except **Michael your prince**. ([Da 10:21](#))

Now at that time **Michael, the great prince** who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress (corresponds to time of Jacob's trouble in [Jer 30:7](#) and the **Great Tribulation** in [Mt 24:21](#)) the such as never occurred since there was a

nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. ([Da 12:1](#))

The term **archangel** denotes a definite rank by virtue of which one is qualified for special work and service.

Vincent comments that

archangels appear in the **apocryphal** (**Ed note:** the Hebrew Old Testament canon recognized by Palestinian Jews [Tanak] did not include the fourteen books of the Apocrypha. Since the Hebrew Bible was preferred by the Reformers during the Protestant Reformation in their struggle against the Catholic Church, whose Bible contained the Apocrypha, translators of Protestant Bibles excluded the Apocrypha.) literature. In the Book of Enoch (see on [Jude 1:14](#)) four are named, Michael, Uriel, Raphael, and Gabriel. Michael is set over the tree which, at the time of the great judgment, will be given over to the righteous and humble, and from the fruit of which life will be given to the elect. In [Tob. 12:15](#), Raphael appears as one of the seven holy angels. Comp. Apoc. 8:2. (Vincent, M. R. Word Studies in the New Testament. Volume 4:42)

3 **AND THE TRUMPET OF GOD: kai en salpiggi theou:** ([Ex 19:16](#); [20:18](#); [Isaiah 27:13](#); [Zechariah 9:14](#); [1Corinthians 15:52](#); [Revelation 1:10](#); [8:13](#))

Trumpet (**salpigx/salpinx** from **salos** = vibration, billow or **salpizo** = to sound a trumpet) is a wind instrument like a bugle that was often used for signaling, especially in connection with war.

TDNT notes that **salpigx** (or salpinx) denotes a wind instrument, made of bronze or iron with a mouthpiece of horn, and broadening out to a megaphone, i.e., a “trumpet.” The word may also denote the sound made by the instrument, its signal or playing. Other uses are for thunder as a heavenly trumpet sound or for a human speaker as a trumpet. (Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Eerdmans)

There are 11 uses of **salpigx** in the NT...

Matthew 24:31 "And He will send forth His angels with a great **trumpet** and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other. (Comment: This time period is at the end of the Great Tribulation, punctuated by Christ's triumphant return, the harvesting of believers and then the separation of the sheep and goats, **Mt 25:31**)

1 Corinthians 14:8 For if the **bugle** produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle?

1 Corinthians 15:52 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.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 (note) For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the **trumpet** of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

Hebrews 12:19 (note) and to the blast of a **trumpet** and the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word should be spoken to them.

Revelation 1:10 (note) I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a **trumpet**,

Revelation 4:1 (note) After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a **trumpet** speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."

Revelation 8:2 (note) And I saw the seven angels who stand before God; and seven **trumpets** were given to them... **8:6** And the seven angels who had the seven **trumpets** prepared themselves to sound them... **8:13** And I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, "**Woe, woe, woe**, to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the **trumpet** of the three angels who are about to sound!"

Revelation 9:14 (note) one saying to the sixth angel who had the **trumpet**, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.

"There are 72 uses of **salpigx** in the Septuagint (LXX) ([Ex 19:13](#), [16](#), [19](#); [20:18](#); [Lev. 23:24](#); [25:9](#); [Num. 10:2](#), [8ff](#); [31:6](#); [Jos. 6:5](#), [8](#), [13](#), [20](#); [1 Sam. 13:3](#); [2 Sam. 2:28](#); [6:15](#); [2 Ki. 11:14](#); [12:13](#); [1 Chr. 13:8](#); [15:24](#), [28](#); [16:6](#), [42](#); [2 Chr. 5:12f](#); [7:6](#); [13:12](#), [14](#); [15:14](#); [20:28](#); [23:13](#); [29:26ff](#); [Ezra. 3:10](#); [Neh. 8:15](#); [12:35](#), [41](#); [Job 39:24f](#); [Ps. 47:5](#); [81:3](#); [98:6](#); [150:3](#); [Isa. 18:3](#); [27:13](#); [58:1](#); [Jer. 4:5](#), [19](#), [21](#); [6:1](#), [17](#); [42:14](#); [51:27](#); [Ezek. 7:14](#); [33:3ff](#); [Dan. 3:5](#), [7](#), [10](#), [15](#); [Hos. 5:8](#); [Joel 2:1](#), [15](#); [Amos 2:2](#); [3:6](#); [Zeph. 1:16](#); [Zech. 9:14](#))

Is the Trumpet here the last Trumpet of Revelation 11

I Cor 15 51

⁵¹ Behold, I tell 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 trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Hiebert adds a similar thought concerning the **trumpet** noting that...

It is clearly parallel to **the last trumpet** in [1 Corinthians 15:52](#) because both passages relate to the rapture of the church. That this trumpet should be equated with the "seventh trumpet" in [Revelation 11:15](#) is highly improbable." The subjects are different: here it is the church; there a wicked world. The results are different: here it is the glorious catching up of the church to be with the Lord; there it is further judgment upon a godless world. Here "the last trumpet signals the close of the life of the church on earth; there the "seventh" trumpet marks a climax in a progressive series of apocalyptic judgments upon the living on earth.

Now eschatology is a very interesting subject and people have studied trumpets in the Bible at infinitum. Trying to figure out what trump is what trumpet and which of the trumpets are these and that and the other. Well, when you see a phrase like the last trump, you don't have to assume that it's the last trumpet that will ever be blown forever. It certainly is the trump that ends the end of the church age. It is the trump that ends the end of the struggle with death. It is the last trump in the sense of it's relation to resurrection. It is the final summons.

Now, the trumpets in the Bible are used for many things. Sometimes to assemble people for festivity, sometimes to assemble people say for...for the triumph that wants to be announced over a great victory in a war, but sometimes trumpets are used to assemble people before God. To summon people to God.

Now you go way back for this to the 19th Chapter of Exodus and here you were introduced to this thought. Exodus 19, and of course, it's time for Moses at the foot of Sinai and the people of Israel to listen to God and "So it came to pass," it says in **Exodus 19:16**, "on the third day in the morning that there were thunders" and God is really letting them know He's up there on Sinai, "that there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mount." Now watch, "and the voice of the trumpet exceedingly loud so that all the people that were in the camp trembled." Now watch verse 17, "And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God." Now the trumpet is used then in this situation to summon people to God. To gather God's people to himself. In Isaiah Chapter 27, you have it also. I think it's 27 and verse 13, right.

And in 27:13, it says this, "And it shall come to pass," it's talking about the kingdom, the millennium, the future, "shall come to pass in that day that the great trumpet shall be blown and they shall come who are ready to perish in the land of Assyria and the outcast in the land of Egypt and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem."

And again, that's just a couple of examples and there are several others where God uses a trumpet to assemble His people to Himself. So some day all that are in the graves are going to hear that trumpet and they're going to come out and be joined with those who are going to be transformed on the way up in the resurrection.

You know, can you imagine what it's going to be like in that day when the graves start releasing their victims. I tried to imagine that and I was reading an interesting thing that came out of the Civil War. This is recorded by very old writer and this is what he says. "During the Civil War, a regiment of soldiers was compelled to sleep in the open field one winter night. In the early morning the chaplain arose and saw a very strange sight. During the night several inches of snow had fallen completely covering the tired, slumbering soldiers who were bundling in their blankets and thus caused the entire field to be filled with many small mounds like

newly made graves. The bugler sound revelee and almost instantly a soldier came forth from each mound. And the chaplain thought of **1 Corinthians 15:52**, "The trumpets shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed."

Now he says, are we going to get changed? Well, it's going to be in a moment. Now the first thing we learned, is it's not a process. Okay? It's not some kind of a long drawn out metamorphosis. It's not some kind of an illusionary cycle that we have to go through. It is going to happen in a moment and the Greek word for moment is atomos, from which we get the word atom. Which really, in the Greek, simply meant the smallest possible particle which could not be divided. Literally it means that which cannot be cut.

Atomos, it cannot be cut.

In other words, in the smallest amount of time of which there is no smaller. In the most finite unit of time, we will be changed. It's going to be so fast you won't even realize it. And the minute it happens you'll forget what you used to be. So don't get all worked up about watching yourself change, you know. It's not going to happen. It's going to hit so fast...in fact, it says in the next...just to help you understand that he says in a...in an atomos. Shortest possible time of which it is possible to have no shorter. You will be changed in the twinkling of an eye.

Now, the twinkling is the not the blinking. The twinkling...one fellow said that I was reading, he said, the twinkling is the time it takes for the light to go from the iris to the retina. And apparently some scientist measured this and said it's $1/6^{\text{th}}$ of a nanosecond. You don't know what a nanosecond and neither do I, but I'll try to help you. I decided...it didn't make much sense unless you know what a nanosecond is. I'll give it to you this way. Okay? You know what a second is, $1/1000^{\text{th}}$. Okay? A microsecond is one millionth of a second. Okay, that's a microsecond is one millionth of a second. A nanosecond is 1000^{th} of microsecond.

And this going to happen in 1/6th of a nanosecond.

AND THE DEAD IN CHRIST WILL RISE FIRST: kai oi nekroi en Christo anastesontai (FMI) proton: ([1Corinthians 15:23,51,52](#); [Revelation 20:5,6](#))

The dead in Christ - This phrase equates with Paul's earlier description of **those who have fallen** asleep ([1Th 4:14-note](#)). Notice the important phrase **in Christ** (see discussions of [in Christ](#) and [in Christ Jesus](#)) indicating that although they are physically dead, they are still in spiritual union with Him. Death cannot sever a believer from Him.

first (**protos** from superlative of **pros** = before) refers first in time, place, order, importance. The idea of first in this context is that the dead believers (those who have fallen asleep in Christ and are now returning with Him in a "disembodied" state) will be resurrected before the living are caught up or raptured. The survivors or those **that remain** will have to wait a moment as it were (more like a "twinkling of the eye"!). The upshot is that the saints who have died will not be at any disadvantage when the Lord returns and will not miss out on one of the more spectacular events in all of human history!

HEN WE WHO ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN: epeita hemeis oi zontes (PAP) hoi perileipomenoi (PPPMPN): ([1Th 4:15](#); [1Co 15:52](#))

Literally this is rendered
Then we the living, the remaining

Shall Be Caught up (726) (**harpazo** from **haireô** = take, in NT only in **middle voice** = **haireomai** = to take for oneself, to choose; akin to **airo** = to raise up) means to snatch up or way, to seize or seize upon, to steal (see comparison to klepto below), to catch away or up, to pluck, to pull.

Harpazo means to take suddenly and vehemently, often with violence and speed or quickly and without warning. The idea is to take by force with a sudden swoop and usually indicates a force which cannot be resisted. In eschatological terms (future events, prophetically related) as in the present verse, **harpazo** refers to what is often known as the "rapture" (Latin = *raptura* = seizing or Latin = *rapio* = seize, snatch)

Harpazo thus can be translated by the verb to **rapture** which describes the act of conveying or transporting a person from one place to another or from one sphere of existence to another. The English word **rapture** can also convey the idea of ecstasy as with one who is "carried out of" oneself with joy, but that is not the primary sense conveyed by the NT usage here in 1 Thessalonians.

Harpazo is future **passive** (so called "divine passive" in this context - the action is exerted by outside divine force) **indicative** (this is the mood of certainty which describes a real event, stating that this is a future fact which we can count on!) first person plural (implying in context not just individuals but many individuals, specifically the true church composed of all the believers of the church age).

Meet (529) (**apantesis** from **apantáo** from **apó** = from + **antáo** = to come opposite to, to meet especially to meet face to face) describes a meeting especially a meeting of two who are coming from different directions.

In Greek culture the word had a technical meaning to describe the visits of dignitaries to cities where the visitor would be formally met by the citizens, or a deputation of them, who had gone out from the city for this purpose and would then be ceremonially

escorted back into the city. **Apantesis** was often used to suggest the meeting of a dignitary or king, a famous person, describing people rushing to meet the one who was coming.

NIDNTT says **apantesis** was a technical term for the solemn meeting of important persons.

Matthew 25:6 "But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to **meet** him.'

Together (260) (**hama**) is a marker of simultaneous occurrence, at the same time, denoting the coincidence of two actions in time. Hama describes a point of time which is emphatically simultaneous with another point of time. Here in verse 17 **hama** depicts a simultaneous snatching up of bodies of both believers who are still alive and believers who had fallen asleep in Christ and had been resurrected prior to being raptured.

Regarding the phrase **with them** (*hama sun*) **Hiebert** writes that this...

is "an unusual expression in the Greek (occurring again in **1Thessalonians 5:10**) meaning here '**simultaneously, with them**. The two groups will, united as one company, arise to meet the Lord. It implies the full association and equality of the two groups. For the living it will mean not only recognition of, but reunion with, their departed loved ones. (Ibid) (Bolding added)

the epitaph written on the tomb of Benjamin Franklin. Benjamin Franklin composed his own epitaph before he died and had it placed on his grave at his death. This is what it says. "The body of Franklin,

printer, like the cover of an old book its content torn out and stripped of its lettering and gilding lies here food for worms. But the work will not be lost for it will appear once more in a new and more elegant edition revised and corrected by the author."