

# **GREAT QUESTIONS - GREAT NEWS!**

**What helps a believer to live holy?  
Can Christ return comfort the  
brokenhearted?**

**What does the word "Rapture" mean?**

**What is the only way we can escape death?**

KEY TEXT

1 Thessalonians chapter 3-4

Each Wednesday – 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Bethel Baptist Church Sanctuary

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Everyone Is Welcome

## 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13

### Paul's Prayer for the Church

**It is the return of Jesus Christ that helps motivate a believer to live a holy life.**

Paul ended chapter 2 with a reference to the place of the saints at the return of Christ.

## 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

### 1 Thessalonians 4:1 (Chuck Smith)

- ✚ The believers in Thessalonica were concerned about their loved ones who had died.
- ✚ What if the Lord should return?
- ✚ Would their deceased loved ones be handicapped in any way?
- ✚ Will those alive at His coming have an advantage over the believers who have died?

In this paragraph, Paul answered their questions.

He based his encouragement and comfort on five fundamental facts!

### **Revelation: We Have God's Truth (4:13, 15a)**

Christians need not wonder about death or life after death.

We have a revelation from God in His Word.

This revelation was not given all at one time.

God's revelation was gradual and progressive.

### **Return: Christ Is Coming Again (4:14-15)**

We have noted the emphasis on the return of Christ in the Thessalonian letters.

Paul related Christ's return to:

- ✚ Salvation (1:9-10)
- ✚ Service (2:19-20)
- ✚ Stability (3:11-13)
- ✚ Sorrow (4:14-15)

He showed how the doctrine of Christ's return can comfort the brokenhearted.

### **Resurrection: The Christian Dead Will Rise (4:15-16)**

When Jesus Christ returns in the air, He will issue the "shout of command" and "the dead in Christ will rise first (4:16).

### **Three unique sounds will be involved in this event:**

- (1) The Lord's shout – a shout of command – like at the tomb of Lazarus.
- (2) The sound of the trumpet – trumpets were used to declare war, announce special times and seasons and to gather people for a journey, and in the Roman Empire trumpets were used to announce the arrival of a great person – When God gave the Law to Israel, the event was preceded by a trumpet blast (Exodus 19:18-20)

- (3) The voice of the archangel – The only archangel named in the bible is Michael (Jude 9) who apparently has a special ministry to Israel (Daniel 10:21) and Revelation 12:7). According to Daniel 10:13 there is more than one archangel so we cannot be sure that it will be Michael's voice. The most important fact is that the angelic host will share in the victory shout when Jesus comes!

### **Rapture: Living Believers Caught Up (4:17)**

The word rapture is not used in this section but that is the literal meaning of "caught up."

The Latin word rapto means "to seize, to carry off" and from it we get our English word "rapture."

When the Lord returns in the air, we who are alive will be "caught away quickly" – in the twinkling of an eye.

### **Reunion: Christians Forever With The Lord (4:17-18)**

You and I will meet the Lord in the air, in person, when He comes for us.

The Greek word translated "meet" carries the idea of meeting a royal person or an important person.

We have walked by faith here on this earth, but in the air we shall "see Him as He is" and become like Him (1 John 3:1-2).

What a glorious day that will be!

It will be a glorious day because we will have glorified bodies!

It will be an everlasting meeting because we shall "forever be with the Lord" (John 14:3).

The goal of redemption is not just to rescue us from judgment, but to relate us to Christ.

Our meeting with the Lord will also be a time of reckoning.

This is also called the Judgment Seat of Christ (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

The Greek word bema, which is translated "judgment seat" referred to a place where the Olympic judges awarded crowns to the winners.

Our works will be judged, and rewards will be given (I Corinthians 3:8 Death is the great separator, but Jesus Christ is the great Reconciler.

On the Mount of Transfiguration, the three disciples knew Moses and Elijah.

"For now, we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as also I am known." (I Corinthians 13:12).

### **Death is a fact of life.**

The only way we can escape death is to be alive when the Lord Jesus Christ returns. Death is not an accident – it is an appointment.

### **Inscription in an old British cemetery not far from Windsor Castle read:**

*Pause my friend, as you walk by;*

*As you are now, so once was I.*

*As I am now, so you will be.*

*Prepare, my friend, to follow me!*

### **A visitor who read that epitaph added these lines:**

*To follow you is not my intent*

*Until I know which way you went!*