

## Prophecy Update 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 The Rapture

### Any Dallas Cowboy football fans here tonight?

A)Yesterday the cowboys – demolished the Eagles 51-24 -

B)The Cowboys are averaging about 81,000 fans at their games this year.

C)Imagine watching the game when suddenly 30k fans disappear.

1)How crazy would that be

D)What would be the reaction ? How long would it take for people to notice?

1)Depends on how much they had to drink

### A person could be driving in a car – suddenly notice – the driver in front of them – Vanishes

A)Empty car rolling down the freeway – Scary

B)Class room full of 30 kids – suddenly 5 vanish Science Fiction?

C)Pastor Rob watching the Psy-fy channel – reruns of the twilight zone? – No

### No I am describing a real event that the Bible predicts will happen in the latter days.

A)Days that I believe we are definitely in –

B)An event that could happen at any moment  
An event known as the **THE RAPTURE!**

C)Believers in Jesus are suddenly vanish from this earth and are taken to heaven to be with Jesus!

### I believe that this is the next event on the prophetic Calendar.

A)Ezk.38 – Battle – Later – early in the Tribulation

B)Nothing that needs to happen – Israel is in place a nation – back in the land

C)Advancement of technology – Mark of the beast Cashless society is in place

1)Spirit of Antichrist is growing { last time

D)Lawlessness is abounding - Signs  
1)Grab and go – under \$1,000 no penalty

### Talking yesterday with a friend who just retired as the Deputy Chief of police a city in Oregon

A)Yrs ago – drug bust – seize \$50k was a big deal

B)But now with the Legalization of weed in Oregon – bust – bringing in Millions

1)More money in the Police station – than the bank

### The stage is being set – the time is getting short – Jesus could come for his church – any time.

A)So tonight I want to talk about the Rapture

B)Now there are Christian leaders who don't believe the Rapture is a Biblical idea –

C)Tonight I am not going to go into that argument because I dealt with that recently on a Sunday Am

1)2 Peter study – November 21<sup>st</sup>

### The Focus of our time tonight – is I want to talk about the rapture

A)Why we at CV along with many others evangelicals – believe this will happen before the tribulation

B)Rapture: 3 Positions in those who believe in this event known as the rapture.

1)Post Tribs – Happens at the end of the Tribulation  
Join the parade -

C)Mid Trib or Pre-wrath – The rapture occurs in the middle of the Tribulation time

1)1<sup>st</sup> 31/2 yrs peaceful Antichrist sets up his kingdom – 2<sup>nd</sup> 31/2 – Wrath of God

D)Pre-wrath – Mid trib – good points but there are some things that they ignore

E)Pre-trib – Before the trib begins

### That is what we believe here at CV – and I wanted to spend our first Prophecy update of 2022 establishing why.

A)This will be a frame of reference for future studies so you know where we stand –

B) Yrs ago we were honored to have the esteemed Pastor and Theologian John Walvoord preach here

1) 88 yrs old Stage – stool – died at 92

C) Respected on the Subject of Bible Prophecy – He wrote great book called the rapture question

D) In the book he sites 50 reasons why the Rapture will happen before the Tribulation

E) Tonight I want to give you 4-5 reasons why I believe the rapture happens before the Trib

F) Finish by talking about how we should be living in light of this information

**Begin – What is the rapture- where do we find this idea in scripture. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18**

**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.**

**Paul is describing an event when Jesus comes from Heaven – there is a shout! – Sound of a trumpet.**

A) He **comes to the clouds** – those who are dead – believers who have already died are with him

B) **They have risen already** – Then we who are alive and remain on the earth – are caught up to meet them in the clouds

1) Glorious reunion! – RAPTURE

C) Wait – wait, wait – the scholar argues – that word rapture is not in the BIBLE.

Cc) You are right – you will not find the word Rapture in our English Bibles –

D) The phrase in verse 17, translated “caught up,” is the Greek word *harpazo*, which means to “**be snatched away or to be taken away.**”

E) When the New Testament was translated into Latin, translators used the word *raptus* for *harpazo*—from which we get our word “**rapture.**”

It is describing a time when believers all over the world are snatched away – heaven

Jesus alluded to the Rapture in John 14:1-3

**"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. {I am going to heaven – to prepare a place for you}**

**3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.**

Receive = to take to one's self!

**Paul also describes this event in 1 Corinthians 15**

*50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Heaven requires a change in our bodies – How will it happen?*

*51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, {Die} 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. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

**Paul is describing an event where the dead are raised incorruptible = new bodies - and those who are alive – changed – Metamorphis**

A) **Same idea – Caterpillar becomes a butterfly**

Aa) **Corruption – these bodies – to incorruption – MORTAL – IMMORTALITY – change - heaven**

B) **Twinkling of an eye - now see me now you don't!**

C) **The Lord comes at an unexpected time - but we need to be ready!**

1) **And we believe that this event is the next event on the prophetic calendar –**

D) Tonight I want to give you 4-5 reasons why the rapture will take place before the tribulation.

**Reason #1 The Message in 1 Thessalonians 4:18 - "Comfort one another with these words."**

A) In this section where Paul is talking about the rapture – how we are going to be caught up to meet the Lord

B) He ends that thought w/ this Exhortation 18 *Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

**C) See this is a Key thing / This Teaching is to comfort us - not freak us out!**

1) Comfort here means – Be encouraged by!

D) Now if rapture is at the end or middle of Trib - that is not very comforting!

E) Paul could end his message *Flee and hide – try to avoid Anti-Christ – tortured hell on earth*

**His message would not be one of comfort but Bear up and prepare for the worst.**

A) Paul doesn't say that – He says comfort one another –

B) Remind and encourage one another that Jesus is coming for his bride

**REASON #2 We are not appointed unto wrath!**

1 Thess 5:1-11 - But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

The Day of the Lord – time period – 1,000 yrs is as one day – one day – 1,000 yrs

The day of the Lord – starts at the rapture – concludes at the end of the 1,000 year reign – So it includes the 7 year period – known as the Trib.

**That is the time period – Paul is referring to here.**

3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden **destruction comes upon them**, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. **And they shall not escape.**

4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this **Day** should overtake you as a thief. 5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the

night nor of darkness. 6 **Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.** 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

9 **For God did not appoint us to wrath**, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, that whether we **wake {ALIVE} or sleep, {DEAD}** we should live together with Him.

11 **Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.**

So here in 1 Thessalonians 5 Paul continues discussing this theme of the Rapture of the Church – which He says comes as **a Thief in the night to an unbelieving World – {Thieves don't send calling cards}**

A) The Rapture is followed by the tribulation – all under the banner of the THE DAY OF THE LORD

B) And on that thought Paul offers these words of Encouragement

*9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. 11 Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.*

C) Romans 5:9 not appointed unto Wrath

D) It describes an ominous time here on planet earth – a time that many of the OT prophets spoke of

E) A time when God pours out his wrath on a world that has rejected him.

F) Days shortened – no flesh would survive

**Now why hasn't God appointed us to wrath?**

A) The wrath we deserve was paid for at Calvary!

B) It was poured out on Jesus **absorbed by Jesus!**

C) The Sacrifice of Jesus is Sufficient to pay the price for the sins of the whole world

1) It is only efficient for the ones who embrace Jesus

D) If we were to go through the Tribulation – we would be experiencing the wrath of God

1) Jesus is punishing us for something Jesus already paid the price for –

E) He is a just God – he will not do that!

**Escapism? Yes but that is Biblical!**

A) Paul – said in V. 3 They will not escape –

B) But Jesus talking about the same time period of the Trib, in Luke 21:34-36 - Said

C) And in v.36 - Jesus says “*Watch and pray that you will be counted worthy to escape and stand before the Son of Man.*”

**Now if this wasn't an option Jesus would have said - watch and buy weapons, gold, store food, get ready go through it!**

A) But He doesn't - He says - pray counted worthy to escape!

B) Worthy to escape by living in a right relationship with Jesus

C) Get rid of our American / western mindset –not fair that we don't suffer

1) Most of the Church – suffers greatly and lives in great poverty.

D) Pause to say this: There is a big difference between persecution- church has always endured.

1) The Devil uses me to try and defeat Christians –

E) Places where persecution is the greatest – the church grows the most

**Now there is persecution that happens during the tribulation –**

A) The Antichrist comes against Jewish people

B) He comes against those who turn to Jesus after the rapture

C) He comes against those who don't take his mark and buy into his plan.

**But here is the difference with the Tribulation time revealed in the book of Revelation**

A) Everything that happens is originating from heaven as a part of the wrath of God.

B) Three forms of Judgment that happen

1) Seal Judgments – start in Ch.6

2) Trumpet Judgments start ch.8

3) Bowl Judgments Ch. 15

C) Cataclysmic events – and God is behind it all – He uses the evil of men – the wickedness of the Devil

D) But everything is orchestrating from His Throne in heaven

E) Right now time of mercy – not getting what we do deserve –

1) But there is a day coming – not too distance future – God will say – time is up – Wrath comes  
2) BUT WE ARE NOT APPOINTED TO WRATH

**Reason #3 The Flow of the book of Revelation**

**Turn to Rev Ch. 1 v.19**

**The book of Rev. is the only book w/ a Divine outline**

A) Understanding this is a key to understanding the book of Rev. (Often confusing but never meant to be)

**V.19 3 part outline** 19 *Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.*

B) This is a key to Understanding the book of Revelation - **SECTION 1** The things that you have SEEN – **VISION OF CH. 1**

C) **SECTION 2** / The things that **ARE** / The letters to the Churches CH.2-3

1) Represents the whole Church age !!!!!

D) Ephesus – Early church – to Present day / Phil. & Laodicia

**Section 3 Write the things that will take place After this – after what? –**

A) After the Church age is completed /

B) **Think about this:** the Word Church is used 19 times in the first 3 Ch.'s of the book of Rev. /

**C) From ch. 4 on never used again/ Why ?**

1) Church is not seen again on the earth

**D) In fact the next time that we see the Church is when the Lord coming Back Ch. 19**

1) We are seen coming back with Him!

**So the 3<sup>rd</sup> Phase of the Book starts with these words *After these things* - what things – the Church age**

*4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."*

A) After the Church age is completed John sees a door standing open in Heaven – voice like a trumpet – says *Come up here and I will show the things that must take place after this*

B) Now what does this remind you of Voice like a Trumpet – **1 Thes. 4 / 1 Cor. 15** – trumpet of God – Calling us up

**This I believe is a wonderful picture of the Rapture – Trumpet sounding & John being called up to meet the Lord**

A) And See the things that take place after the Church age –

B) Church is not seen again **on the Earth** in Rev. – until after the trib at the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming

**C) Chapter 4-5 Church in heaven –**

1) Ch.6 The tribulation starts – **GOD'S WRATH**

**Rev 6:1-2 First Seal: The Conqueror**

**6 Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." 2 And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.**

A) The Tribulation opens with the coming of the Anti-Christ on the scene – **not Jesus** –

B) Counterfeit – Looks similar – white horse and all.

C) But this is what I want you to catch – this is all **ORIGINATING FROM HEAVEN** –

D) He comes conquering and to conquer – He is going to force himself into position

1) Saw last time – he is a man of war.

**Great diplomatic leader -**

A) Antichrist comes on the Scene / Solve Problem of the Rapture /

B) Solve Problem in the Middle East – Arab / Israeli Conflict - He will make Peace w/ Israel

**In Daniel 9 we see the Division of the Tribulation into these 2 3.5 year periods – you know why?**

A) The first 3.5 yrs peace with Israel – helps solve the problems in the middle east

B) Jews and the Arabs Co-exist –

**C) Helps Israel rebuild their temple**

1) Many will think he is their Messiah

D) The 2<sup>nd</sup> 3.5 yrs he turns on Israel – Abomination of desolation – takes place –

1) All hell breaks loose

**But as we read further here in Revelation – these seal judgments – again originating from heaven**

A) There are some horrific things happening on planet earth

B) 2<sup>nd</sup> Seal – War and Violence on planet earth

C) 3<sup>rd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> seal -Famine and death ¼ of the earth's population.

1) 1.7 Billion people that will die during that time.

D) 5<sup>th</sup> Seal those who have come to Christ in the Tribulation – die for their faith – Martyred

**E) 6<sup>th</sup> Seal earthquakes and cataclysmic events – Read The reaction**

**15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne/ **God the Father** - and from the wrath of the Lamb!**

**17 "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"**

**I pointed that out because those who believe that the Rapture happens at the mid-way point of the Trib**

A) To refute the argument that in 1 Thess 5 that we are not appointed unto wrath – they say:

B) The first 3 1/2 yrs is the wrath of the lamb  
The 2<sup>nd</sup> 3 1/2 yrs – THE GREAT TRIB – is the wrath of God.

C) My Bible doesn't make that distinction- this is all originating from the throne – **He who sits ... Lamb**

1) Jesus is God

**D) S0 Reason #3 The flow of the book of Revelation**

**Reason #4 We are to be Looking for the Coming of Jesus Christ.**

*Titus 2: 11-13 “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,*

**13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”**

A) So here in Titus we are instructed on how we are to be looking for the coming of Jesus Christ

**B) But those who embrace the mid & Post Trib. view points are not looking for Jesus appearing / but the appearing of Antichrist { Has to come first**

C) LISTEN: No where in scripture are we -told to be looking for Antichrist !

1) Why? We are not going to be here!

**Reason #5 The Jewish wedding Ceremony**

A) Beautiful picture In Jewish culture marriages were most often Arranged (EXPLAIN)

B) Now when the Kids came of age where they could actually be married –

1) one thing that needed to take place first was home prepared

C) So the boy - bridegroom would begin to build a dwelling place for him and his bride

1) the wedding couldn't take place until it was finished!

D) Now Who determined when it was finished? - His Father

**This is so great in comparison to our situation**

A) John 14 - Jesus says - *going to heaven prepare a place for you - my bride - (betrothed to the Lord)*

B) He said - *I will come again and receive you to myself*

1) but also says - *no man knows the day or the hour of that coming except - Father!*

C) But Jesus said - *we should know the times and seasons - understand when things are getting closer!*

**So the bridegroom would be working on the house**

A) And the bride would get reports from friends – relatives

**B) (Times / Seasons – Next week – Invite a Friend)**

1) Walls are up / roof is on / windows in / front door is up/ it could be any day now! - finished

C) Now over the years it became the custom of the bridegroom to surprise his bride in the middle of the night - early morning

**Matt 25 Parable of the ten virgins is about – 5 ready 5 who were not ready**

D) He and his groomsmen come into town to her house making a lot of noise!

1) Awaken Bride and her bridesmaids - needed to be ready

E) Now **Check this out!** Bridegroom and bride would then go to the house he prepared - stay 7 days!

1) family and friends - party - celebrate - at the end of the 7 days - bride would be presented!

**Incredible picture of what the bible teaches of Christ and His church**

1.) Betrothed to Him

2.) Gone to prepare a place

3.) No one knows day or hour except Father

4.) Bride gets reports - we know times and seasons

5.) Bridegroom comes - 7 year feast - presented at 2<sup>nd</sup> coming

**Pastor Rob – Why are you making such a big deal of this? Does it really Matter? – Yes**

A) Our whole outlook on life – changes if we think that the Rapture isn't real –

B) Or that it happens at the midway point or the end of the tribulation –

1) We are looking for Antichrist –

C) We are gearing up for tough times

**D) We are hoping that we have more time – it is the thing we want to avoid –**

E) We should be storing up food – guns –

1) Food banks to help unbelievers –

**But the Bible doesn't instruct us in that way! –**

A) What does it tell us to be doing? Our Response?

2 Peter 1:10 - *Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.*

**1 John 3:3 “Whoever has this hope in Him purifies himself even as He is pure.”**

A) Grown tired of waiting – dropped guard – oil lamp

Luke 19 Parable of a Master – who left with a promise to return – exhortation to his servants  
Luke 19:13- **“Do business until I come back!”**

**Quit our jobs – charge of credit cards?**

A) No concept of the big Picture – the Kingdom

B) We exist as his ambassadors – win others to Jesus

C) Now entering the mission field

D) Apology evangelism –

**Why does the Lord wait? 2 Peter 3:8-9**

**8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.**

Neighbors friends -

C) Waiting for you – today is the day of Salvation

D) The Devil wants you to think otherwise !

**Fictional story - meeting Satan held w/ demons where trying to figure out how to trick people into eternal damnation**

A) **1st demon:** *"There is no God" - no Satan said - creation declares the reality of God.*

*People too smart to deny His existence*

*A few idiots might get sucked in but not the masses*

B) **2nd demon:** *"No Hell". No said Satan - "People understand there needs to be retribution and judgment - people won't buy that*

C) **3rd demon:** *"Instead of saying no God or no hell - no hurry!*

1) *Satan responded that is it!* No hurry! Spread the word

D) Sad but true many have lost their sense of urgency but the cry will soon come.