

09-19-10

Series: The Resurrections

The Resurrections (22)

What Happens to Christians Who Die?

([1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#))

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[Matthew 28:1-10](#)

(Continuation from 09-12-10)

The Doctrine of the Resurrections

([1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#))

The Thessalonians' *ignorance about the Rapture* caused them to grieve. It was to give them hope and to comfort them that Paul discussed that momentous event, giving a fourfold description of it: **1) its pillars, 2) participants, 3) plan, and 4) profit.**

So far we have looked at: 1) The Pillars of the Rapture: 1. The Death of Christ, **2.** The Resurrection of Christ, and **3.** The Revelation of Christ. **2) The Participants of the Rapture.** Now let us look at **3) The Plan of the rapture.**

3) The Plan of the Rapture

[1 Thessalonians 4:16e \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁶ **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 will rise first.**

Fifth, to the Lord's command and the archangel's voice will be added the sounding of the trumpet of God (cf. [1 Corinthians 15:52](#)).

Trumpets were used in Scripture for many reasons.

- 1) They sounded at Israel's feasts ([Numbers 10:10](#)),
- 2) celebrations ([2 Samuel 6:15](#)), and
- 3) convocations ([Leviticus 23:24](#)),
- 4) to sound an alarm in time of war ([Numbers 10:9](#)) or
- 5) for any other reason it was necessary to gather a crowd ([Numbers 10:2](#); [Judges 6:34](#)) or
- 6) to make an announcement ([1 Samuel 13:3](#); [2 Samuel 15:10](#); [2 Samuel 20:1](#); [1 Kings 1:34, 39, 41](#)).

The trumpet at the Rapture has no connection to the trumpets of judgment in [Revelation 8-11](#).

It seems to have a twofold purpose: 1) to assemble God's people (cf. [Exodus 19:16-19](#)) and 2) to signal His deliverance of them (cf. [Zechariah 1:16](#); [Zechariah 9:14-16](#)).

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1 Thessalonians 4:16f (NASB)

¹⁶ 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 will rise first.

Sixth, the dead in Christ will rise first.

As noted above, the dead saints will in no way be inferior to those alive at the Rapture.

In fact, they **will rise first**, their glorified bodies joining with their glorified spirits to make them into the image of Christ, as the apostle John wrote in ([1 John 3:2](#)).

Those who were in Christ in life will be so in death; death cannot separate believers from God ([Romans 8:38](#); [Romans 14:8](#)).

1 Thessalonians 4:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

Finally, those believers **who are alive and remain will be caught up together** with the dead saints **in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.**

Harpazō (**caught up**) refers to a strong, irresistible, even violent act.

In [Matthew 11:12](#) it describes the taking of the kingdom of heaven by force.

In [John 10:12](#) it describes a wolf snatching sheep;

In [John 10:28-29](#) it speaks of the impossibility of anyone's snatching believers out of the hands of Jesus Christ and God the Father;

In [Acts 8:39](#) it speaks of Philip's being snatched away from the Ethiopian eunuch; and

In [2 Corinthians 12:2, 4](#) it describes Paul's being caught up into the third heaven.

It is when living believers are **caught up** that they are transformed and receive their glorified bodies ([Philippians 3:21](#)).

“**In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye**” believers “**will be changed**” ([1 Corinthians 15:52](#)), rescued from the grasp of Satan, the fallen flesh, the evil world system, and the coming wrath of God.

1 Corinthians 15:52 (NASB)

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 will be changed.