

10-03-10

Series: The Resurrections

The Resurrections (24)

What Happens to Christians Who Die?

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

Pastor Eddie Ildefonso

[Matthew 28:1-10](#)

(Continuation from 09-26-10)

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

“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.**

The following arguments present a strong case in favor of the **pre-tribulation Rapture.**

First, the earthly kingdom of Christ promised in [Revelation 6-18](#) does not mention the church as being on earth.

Second, [Revelation 19](#) does not mention a Rapture even though that is where a **post-tribulation Rapture** (if true) would logically occur.

Third, a **post-tribulation Rapture** renders the Rapture concept itself inconsequential.

Fourth, if God **raptures** and **glorifies** all believers just prior to the inauguration of the millennial kingdom (as a **post-tribulation Rapture** demands), no one would be left to populate and propagate the earthly kingdom of Christ promised to Israel.

Fifth, the New Testament does not warn of an impending tribulation, such as is experienced during Daniel's seventieth week, for church-age believers.

Sixth, Paul's instructions here to the Thessalonians demand a **pre-tribulation Rapture** because, if Paul were teaching them **post-tribulationism**, one would expect them to rejoice that loved ones were home with the Lord and spared the horrors of the Tribulation. But, in actuality, the Thessalonians grieved.

10-03-10

Series: [The Resurrections](#)

In addition, with a **post-tribulational** teaching one would expect them to sorrow over their own impending trial and inquire about their future doom; however, they expressed no such dread or questioning. Further, one might expect Paul to instruct and exhort them concerning such a supreme test as the Tribulation, but Paul wrote only about the hope of the Rapture.

Seventh, the sequence of events at Christ's coming following the Tribulation demands a **pre-tribulational Rapture**.

A comparing and contrasting of **Rapture** passages with **Second Coming** passages yields strong indicators that the **Rapture** could not be post-tribulational.

For example:

(a) at the **Rapture**, Christ gathers His own ([1 Thessalonians 4:16-17](#) of the present passage), but at the **Second Coming**, angels gather the elect ([Matthew 24:31](#));

(b) at the **Rapture**, resurrection is prominent ([1 Thessalonians 4:15-16](#) of the present passage), but regarding the **Second Coming**, Scripture does not mention the resurrection;

(c) at the **Rapture**, Christ comes to reward believers ([1 Thessalonians 4:17](#) of the present passage), but at the **Second Coming**, Christ comes to judge the earth ([Matthew 25:31-46](#));

(d) at the **Rapture**, the Lord snatches away true believers from the earth ([1 Thessalonians 4:15-17](#) of the present passage), but at the **Second Coming**, He takes away unbelievers ([Matthew 24:37-41](#));

(e) at the **Rapture**, unbelievers remain on the earth, whereas at the **Second Coming**, believers remain on the earth;

(f) concerning the **Rapture**, Scripture does not mention the establishment of Christ's kingdom, but at His **Second Coming**, Christ sets up His kingdom; and

(g) at the **Rapture**, believers will receive glorified bodies, whereas at the **Second Coming**, no one will receive glorified bodies.

Eighth, certain of Jesus' teachings demand a **pre-tribulational Rapture**.

For instance, **the parable of the wheat and the tares** ([Matthew 13:24-30](#)) portrays the **reapers (angels)** removing the **tares (unbelievers)** from among the **wheat (believers)** in order to judge the **tares**, which demonstrates that at the **Second Coming**, the **Lord** has unbelievers removed from among believers.

However, at the **Rapture**, He takes believers from among unbelievers.

This is also true in the **parable of the dragnet** ([Matthew 13:47-50](#)) and in the discussion of the **days of Noah** and the description of the **nations' judgment**, both in the **Olivet Discourse** ([Matthew 24-25](#)).