

05-09-10

Series: [The Resurrections](#)

The Resurrections (6)

What Happens to Christians Who Die?

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

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[Matthew 28:1-10](#)

(Continuation from 05-02-10)

The Doctrine of the Resurrections

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

The study of the end times is the consuming passion of many in the church today. Sensational best-selling authors argue that current events fulfill their often dubious interpretations of biblical prophecy. Some claim to have figured out the secret that even Jesus in His Incarnation did not know—the time of the Second Coming (cf. [Matthew 24:36](#)).

[Matthew 24:36 \(NASB\)](#)

³⁶ **But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.**

Tragically, some people get so caught up in the study of eschatology that they neglect the basic principles of spiritual growth and evangelism that the Second Coming is designed to motivate.

Of all the end-time events, the Rapture of the church seems to generate the most interest and discussion. The young church at Thessalonica also had questions about that event, so Paul addressed their concerns in this passage.

But unlike most modern-day treatises on the subject, Paul's concern was not just doctrinal, but pastoral. His intent was not to give a detailed description of the Rapture, but to comfort the Thessalonians.

The intent of the other two passages in the New Testament that discuss the Rapture ([John 14:1-3](#); [1 Corinthians 15:51-58](#)) is also to provide comfort and encouragement for believers, not to fuel their prophetic speculations.

When Paul penned this epistle, the Thessalonians had been in Christ only for a few months. The apostle had taught them about end-time events, such as Christ's return to gather believers to Himself (e.g., [1 Thessalonians 1:9-10](#); [1 Thessalonians 2:19](#); [1 Thessalonians 3:13](#)).

They also knew about the Day of the Lord ([1 Thessalonians 5:1-3](#)), a time of coming judgment on the ungodly.

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But some issues about the details of their gathering to Christ troubled them.

First, they seem to have been afraid that they had missed the Rapture, since the persecution they were suffering ([1 Thessalonians 3:3-4](#)) caused some to fear they were in the Day of the Lord, which they obviously had not expected to experience ([2 Thessalonians 2:1-2](#)).

Furthering that misconception were some false teachers, about whom Paul warned in [2 Thessalonians 2:2](#), “[Do] not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.”

But the persecution they were experiencing was not that associated with the **Tribulation** or the **Day of the Lord**. It was merely the persecution that all believers can expect ([2 Timothy 3:12](#)) and that Paul had warned the Thessalonians about ([1 Thessalonians 3:3-4](#)).