

When The Trumpet Sounds

Series 1-12

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Introduction to the Series: *When the Trumpet Sounds*

There are pages in your Bible you don't just read—you live in them. You bleed on them. You cry over them. You press your heart to the paper until the verses aren't just ink on the page—they're the foundation holding up your soul.

For me, this page—1 Thessalonians chapters 4 and 5—is one of those places.

Since 1993, this Bible has been with me through storms and sunlight, in pulpits and prayer closets, in coffee shops and hospital rooms. If you opened to this section, you'd see the story written not just in Scripture, but in scars—coffee stains, sweat rings, blood where I cut myself flipping too quickly through its pages, even tear drops from moments when the weight of this hope nearly buckled my knees.

It's not clean. It's not pristine. But it's holy to me. Not because I'm holy, but because **God met me here**—again and again—with the blessed hope.

And in a world where confusion has become a kind of currency and deception is more popular than truth, I believe it's time to revisit this hope—not as a theological debate, but as a personal anchor.

This is why I'm writing this 12-part series:

When the Trumpet Sounds.

Why This Series Matters Now

Everywhere I turn, people are either panicked or asleep. The Church is divided into two extremes: one that's terrified every time the news cycle turns, and another that's so spiritually numb they wouldn't hear the trumpet if it blasted in their living room.

And in the middle of it all, **the rapture** has been dismissed, distorted, or altogether forgotten.

Some mock it.

Some twist it into timelines and charts so complicated that even they don't understand

them.

Some just never hear it mentioned at all—not from the pulpit, not in their Bible studies, not even in their worship.

But the Apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said:

“I would not have you to be ignorant...” (1 Thess. 4:13)

That wasn’t a casual remark. That was a command.

This is not a side issue. This is a pillar of our hope. And it’s not meant to frighten us.

It’s meant to comfort us.

This series will walk you through the heart of what the rapture means—not just the timeline, but the **tears behind it.**

Not just the trumpet, but **the trembling joy of meeting the Lord in the air.**

Not just the doctrine, but **the devotion.**

The Blood in the Margins

When you look at my Bible page on 1 Thessalonians 4–5, you’re not seeing a theological textbook. You’re seeing a battlefield.

You’re seeing:

- Sermon notes scribbled in hotel rooms after long nights of preaching.
- Bible study cross-references written down in camp meetings and Spirit-filled conferences where someone stood up and said, “Turn to that verse again!”
- Personal reminders—phrases I jotted down through conviction, encouragement, or sheer desperation in a spiritual storm.
- Dates. Names. Moments.

You’re seeing **my journey with this truth.**

I’ve read this section over 140 times. And that’s a conservative guess. I’ve wept over it. Prayed over it. Taught it. Debated it. But more than anything else... I’ve **believed it.**

And I want you to believe it too—not just with your head, but with your **whole heart.**

The Purpose of These 12 Essays

This is not a “scholarly series.” It’s a **shepherd’s cry**.

Each essay in this series will:

- Start from the pages of Scripture (KJV), rightly divided and rooted in dispensational truth.
- Speak **directly to you**, the reader—not in abstract terms, but with the urgency of a pastor who loves your soul.
- Defend the **pre-tribulation rapture** as sound doctrine for the Church, rightly distinguishing it from the Second Coming.
- Harmonize your doubts with hope. Your confusion with clarity. Your pain with purpose.

I’m not writing this to win arguments.

I’m writing this to **strengthen saints**.

Because we’re in a time when people need a sound mind again.

They need to know that **God didn’t appoint them to wrath**.

They need to understand that **Jesus is coming**, and He hasn’t left us to figure it out blindly.

They need to know that this isn’t escapism.

It’s **a rescue**.

And that trumpet **will sound**.

To the Confused, the Hungry, the Ready

Maybe you’ve never really understood the rapture.

Maybe you’ve heard too many mixed messages.

Maybe you’ve grown cold.

Or maybe, like me, you’ve lived in these verses, and you’re just looking for someone else who still believes them like you do.

Wherever you are on that spectrum, these 12 essays are for you.

They're for:

- The weary preacher wondering if anyone still wants to hear sound doctrine.
- The young believer scrolling through chaos, wondering if there's anything left to hold onto.

- The brokenhearted who buried a loved one in Christ and long for that reunion in the air.
- The student who's confused by charismatic noise or scholarly pride.
- The bride waiting for her Groom.

You're not crazy for believing in the rapture.

You're not naive.

You're **biblical**.

And when that trumpet sounds—it's not going to be a metaphor.

It's going to be **a moment** that splits time and eternity.

Final Words Before the First Essay

As we begin this journey, I ask you to do something simple.

Don't just study these essays.

Soak in them.

Pray through them.

Open your Bible, underline the verses, and let the Spirit speak.

Let hope rise in your soul again.

Because the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven—with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God...

And that moment is not the end—it's the beginning of everything we've ever longed for.

He's coming.

Let's be ready.

Let's comfort one another.

Let's sound the alarm.

And when that trumpet sounds... let's be found **watching, worshipping, and working**.

1 of 12: When the Trumpet Sounds – We Would Not Have You Ignorant

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.”

—1 Thessalonians 4:13 (KJV)

There's a reason God told us this.

There's a reason Paul, by divine revelation, insisted we not be ignorant.

And there's a reason this passage—though often neglected today—is the lifeline for millions who still believe, still watch, and still wait.

Because **hope is oxygen** to the Church.

Without it, we choke in fear, confusion, and despair.

With it, we stand in boldness, endurance, and joy—no matter the darkness around us.

This first essay in the 12-part series ***When the Trumpet Sounds*** opens with the phrase that shaped your walk and defined your study: **“I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren.”** These are not the words of a mere theologian—they are the cry of a shepherd, a Spirit-led apostle, who is delivering **a revelation so important**, it cannot be left in the shadows.

Let this essay speak not only to your mind but your heart. This isn't a lecture. This is a **letter**—from a pastor who has read this page over 140 times, who has bled on it, wept on it, and lived in it—to **the Body of Christ** who so desperately needs it again.

I. Paul's Burden: The Danger of Ignorance

Paul uses the phrase “I would not have you to be ignorant” several times in his epistles—and every time, it signals divine urgency. In Romans 11, it's about Israel's blindness. In 1 Corinthians 12, it's about spiritual gifts. In 2 Corinthians 1, it's about God's deliverance from suffering. But here, in **1 Thessalonians 4:13**, it's about something even more sacred: **the rapture of the Church.**

Why?

Because ignorance here doesn't just cause confusion—it causes **despair.**

The believers in Thessalonica were grieving. Some of their fellow Christians had died. And without a full understanding of what Paul was about to reveal, they feared those saints might **miss** the return of Christ.

They weren't doubting Christ's coming—they were unsure about the **order** of events. And Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, settles it once and for all—not with mystery, but with clarity.

He begins not by talking about timelines, beasts, or bowls of wrath. He starts with **the heart**:

“That ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.”

The rapture is not introduced as **speculation**.

It is introduced as **comfort**.

II. The Sorrow of the World vs. the Hope of the Church

Paul does not say, “Don’t sorrow.” He says, “Don’t sorrow **as others which have no hope.**”

We do sorrow. But we do not grieve like the world does. Our tears fall on the same soil—but the roots go deeper.

The world sees a casket and concludes, “It’s over.”

We see a casket and remember, “The dead in Christ shall rise first.”

The world buries their dead in fear.

We bury ours in **expectation**.

To the world, death is a period.

To the believer, it’s a **comma**—because the next sentence starts with resurrection.

The rapture doctrine doesn’t take away grief—it transforms it. It sanctifies it.

It doesn’t numb us—it anchors us. It says:

“You’ll see them again. And you’ll see Christ.”

That’s why this truth isn’t optional. It’s essential.

III. “If We Believe...” – The Rapture Begins at the Cross

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again...” (1 Thess. 4:14)

The rapture is not built on imagination—it is built on **resurrection**.

This is not escapism. This is the fruit of the gospel.

Paul roots the rapture in the historical fact of Christ’s resurrection. Why? Because our destiny is tied to His.

He died—so we could live.

He rose—so we could rise.

He ascended—so we could be **caught up** with Him.

We don't need new revelation—we need to believe the one we've already been given. The condition is simple:

“If we believe...”

It's not about how much prophecy you've memorized. It's not about whether you can explain Daniel's 70th week.

It's about trusting that the One who rose from the grave will also raise His bride.

This is not a theological argument. It's a **blood-bought promise**.

IV. The Lord Himself Shall Descend

“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord...” (v. 15)

Paul isn't writing this based on tradition or speculation. He didn't pick this up from a traveling teacher or synagogue scroll. He declares, **“This we say by the word of the Lord.”**

This means **Jesus told him directly**.

What follows is not symbolic. Not poetic. Not open to mystical interpretation.

This is a **step-by-step prophecy** revealed by Christ to His apostle—something not found in the Old Testament, and only hinted at in the Gospels.

“That we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.”

The living will **not go before** the dead. The dead in Christ will be raised **first**.

What comfort that must have been to the Thessalonians! And what comfort it is to us now—2,000 years later—burying saints with **the same promise in our ears**:

“You'll see them again.”

Not someday. Not metaphorically.

In the air. In the clouds. With the Lord. Forever.

V. A Thunderous Sequence: Shout, Voice, Trumpet

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God...” (v. 16)

This is no secret whisper. This is no quiet ascension.

This is a **cosmic call to rise**.

- **The Lord Himself shall descend** – Not an angel. Not a proxy. **Jesus Christ**.
- **With a shout** – A commanding cry, like a groom calling for His bride.
- **With the voice of the archangel** – A royal announcement from heaven’s throne room.
- **With the trump of God** – A sound no grave can ignore.

This is not the trumpet of Revelation 11—that belongs to judgment, and it involves angels.

This is **the trumpet of grace**, and it calls the Church home.

Every trumpet in Scripture signals a divine movement—gathering, war, or coronation. And this one gathers the Body of Christ to meet our King in the sky.

VI. The Dead in Christ Shall Rise First

Here we come to one of the most soul-stirring lines in Scripture:

“And the dead in Christ shall rise first...” (v. 16)

Let that settle in.

Every believer who ever died—from Stephen to your grandmother—will rise in glorified bodies. Not ghosts. Not spirits. Not metaphors. **Resurrected, transformed, eternal bodies.**

This is not a new idea—it’s the **natural extension of the resurrection**.

Just as Christ’s tomb was empty, so shall every grave of the redeemed be **emptied by the trumpet**.

No death can hold them. No soil can keep them.

The same voice that said, “Lazarus, come forth” will call again—and this time, **millions will answer**.

VII. Caught Up Together – The Rapture Defined

“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds...”
(v. 17)

This is the rapture.

The word “rapture” comes from the Latin **rapturo**, which is translated from the Greek **harpazo**, meaning **to snatch away, to seize suddenly**.

Some mock it.

They say, “The word ‘rapture’ isn’t in the Bible.”

Neither is the word “Trinity.”

But the truth is there—**loud and clear**.

The Church will be **snatched away**.

Not spiritually. Not figuratively.

Physically. Publicly. Miraculously.

And not alone.

“Caught up **together**...”

This is not a solitary escape. This is a **reunion**.

- Caught up with our loved ones.
- Caught up with believers from every age and every nation.
- Caught up with saints who died in hospitals, jungles, deserts, prisons, and pulpits.
- Caught up **with Christ**.

VIII. To Meet the Lord in the Air

“...to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” (v. 17)

This is our first face-to-face meeting with Jesus—not on earth, not in Jerusalem, but **in the air**.

Why the air?

Because this is a **heavenly calling** (Philippians 3:14).

This is a **change of realm**—from corruptible to incorruptible.

From mortality to immortality.

From the Church on earth to the bride made ready.

This is not the Second Coming when Christ comes to the earth and sets up His kingdom—that happens later.

This is **the catching away of His bride**, before the wrath, before the judgment, before the day of vengeance.

“And so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

That’s the goal.

That’s the climax.

Not the clouds. Not the trumpet. Not the reunion.

It’s **Him**.

We are not raptured to a place—we are raptured to a **person**.

IX. Comfort One Another

“Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” (v. 18)

This is not speculation. This is not theology for academics.

This is **pastoral medicine**.

When the world rages, comfort one another.

When saints die, comfort one another.

When fear rises, comfort one another.

With these words.

What words?

- “The Lord shall descend.”
- “The dead in Christ shall rise first.”
- “Caught up together.”
- “So shall we ever be with the Lord.”

If these aren’t the words you’re hearing in your church, something’s wrong.

If these aren’t preached at funerals, something’s missing.

If these aren’t in your soul, then you’re grieving like those who have no hope.

The early Church didn’t dread the rapture—they **longed for it**.

So should we.

Final Thoughts

This first essay has been a journey into the foundation—the heartbeat—of our blessed hope.

There is no need to be confused.

There is no need to sorrow like the world.

There is no need to remain in darkness.

Jesus is coming.

The trumpet will sound.

And whether you sleep in Christ or are alive and remaining, you **will be caught up.**

So stay watchful.

Stay ready.

And comfort one another.

This is just the beginning.

2 of 12: When the Trumpet Sounds – The Sleeping Saints Shall Rise: A Doctrine of Comfort and Resurrection

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.”

—1 Thessalonians 4:14–15 (KJV)

There is no doctrine in the Bible more misunderstood by the world and more precious to the believer than the resurrection. To the world, death is the end. It’s a black hole of silence. It’s the great unknown. But to the child of God, death is not the end. It’s not the final word. It is sleep in Jesus—and the next word spoken will be His.

In the second part of our twelve-part series, *When the Trumpet Sounds*, we turn our eyes to a promise that cannot fail, a truth that brings tears to the eyes and strength to the soul: **the resurrection of the dead in Christ**. This isn’t theology for textbooks—it’s the doctrine that comforts brokenhearted mothers, lonely widows, persecuted saints, and tired preachers.

Paul isn’t speculating here in 1 Thessalonians 4:14–15. He’s not trying to inspire with sentiment. He’s laying down unshakable **truth revealed by the Lord Himself**.

This is the doctrine of comfort:

If He rose, they will rise.

If He speaks, they will awaken.

If He comes, they will return with Him.

Let's walk carefully through these verses and watch the sleeping saints rise.

I. "For If We Believe..." – Faith in the Resurrection Is the Key

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again..." (v. 14)

Paul begins with a condition—but not one that's in doubt. This "if" is rhetorical. It's as if Paul is saying, "And we do believe, don't we?"

And what do we believe?

That Jesus didn't just die—**He rose again.**

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is not just the climax of the gospel—it is the very **foundation of every Christian hope.**

Paul said elsewhere:

"If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." (1 Cor. 15:14)

If Christ didn't rise, the gospel is broken. The tomb is our final destination. Our hope is shattered. But because He **did** rise—**bodily, physically, visibly**—so will those who have died in Him.

That's why Paul begins with this foundational doctrine: **the resurrection of Christ guarantees the resurrection of His saints.**

This isn't a new twist on Old Testament prophecy. This isn't borrowed Jewish mysticism. This is the **centerpiece of New Testament theology**, and it undergirds every promise about the rapture.

If you don't believe in the resurrection, you won't believe in the rapture.

But if you do—if you trust that Jesus rose bodily from the grave—then you have every reason to believe that **your loved ones in Christ will also rise.**

II. "Them Also Which Sleep in Jesus" – Who Are the Sleeping Saints?

"...even so them also which sleep in Jesus..." (v. 14)

Notice the language: **“sleep in Jesus.”**

This is Paul’s preferred term for the death of a believer. It’s not meant to deny consciousness after death, nor does it support the false doctrine of soul sleep. Paul made it clear in 2 Corinthians 5:8 that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

So why does he call it sleep?

Because **sleep is temporary.**

Because **sleep ends with awakening.**

Because **sleep is peaceful when you’re in Jesus.**

When a believer dies, they are instantly in the presence of Christ. Their **body sleeps**, but their **soul is alive and aware**. That’s why Paul could say in Philippians 1:23 that to depart and be with Christ is “far better.”

But here’s the glory of it: Jesus is not finished with the body.

He will not leave your bones in the grave.

He will not leave your temple in the dust.

What He purchased in full—spirit, soul, and body—**He will redeem in full.**

The sleeping saints will rise. And not as ghosts. Not as spirits. But in **glorified, resurrected, incorruptible bodies**, patterned after the body of the risen Christ.

III. “Will God Bring With Him” – The Double Movement of the Rapture

“...will God bring with him.” (v. 14)

Let that phrase settle into your spirit. It’s easy to skip over it, but it’s a thunderous promise.

Who is bringing whom? And from where?

This is **the double movement of the rapture**:

1. The **souls of those who sleep in Jesus** are already with Him.
2. When He descends, **He brings them with Him.**
3. Their **bodies rise from the grave.**
4. And in a twinkling of an eye, **body and soul reunite in glorified form.**

This isn’t poetic imagery. This is **God’s architectural blueprint for resurrection.**

Think about it:

- Jesus comes down.
- The spirits of the saints come with Him.
- The trumpet sounds.
- The graves open.
- The bodies are raised.
- And they meet again in the air—spirit and body, reunited, never to be separated again.

This is not a general resurrection at the end of time. This is **the resurrection of the dead in Christ**, and it precedes the tribulation. It is the fulfillment of the blessed hope, the next event on God’s calendar for His Church.

This is not mythology. This is **comforting doctrine**.

IV. “By the Word of the Lord” – Divine Authority, Not Human Opinion

“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord...” (v. 15)

Paul doesn’t claim this is a theory or interpretation. He doesn’t say, “I think...” or “It seems...” He says this is **by the word of the Lord**.

This means two things:

1. This revelation came **directly from Jesus**.
2. It has the same weight as the red-letter words of Christ in the Gospels.

Some scholars believe Paul is referring to a direct teaching Jesus gave during His post-resurrection appearances—perhaps something not recorded in the Gospels. Others believe this was revealed to Paul supernaturally, as part of the “mysteries” entrusted to him as the apostle of the Gentiles.

Either way, what follows is **not up for debate**. It’s not a tradition. It’s not rabbinical. It’s not mystical.

It is **the word of the Lord**.

When we preach the rapture, we’re not sharing opinions. We’re declaring the unchanging truth of God.

V. “We Which Are Alive and Remain” – The Hope of the Living

“...that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord...” (v. 15)

Paul includes himself here—not because he was mistaken about timing, but because he lived in **constant expectancy**.

The early church didn’t set dates. They didn’t build charts. They simply believed He could come **at any moment**.

Paul believed it.

The Thessalonians believed it.

And we should too.

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

—Titus 2:13

There is **no sign** that must be fulfilled before the rapture. There is **no prophecy** that must come first. It is **imminent**, meaning it could happen **any second**.

And those who are alive and remain—those of us who haven’t died before that trumpet sounds—will not be caught off guard if we are **watching**.

What a hope!

To be living and breathing when the clouds split...

To feel your body transform in a twinkling...

To rise with the saints who have gone before...

To meet the Lord in the air...

This is not wishful thinking. This is **what the Bible says**.

VI. “Shall Not Prevent Them Which Are Asleep” – The Divine Order of Resurrection

“...shall not prevent them which are asleep.” (v. 15)

The word “prevent” in 1611 English means **to go before, to precede**. Paul is reassuring the believers that the **dead in Christ are not at a disadvantage**. Quite the opposite—**they rise first**.

Here is the divine sequence:

1. Jesus descends from heaven.

2. The trumpet of God sounds.
3. The **dead in Christ rise first.**
4. Then we who are alive and remain are caught up **together with them.**

This is not a disjointed event. It's not chaos. It's orchestrated glory. God doesn't improvise—**He orders His movements with precision.**

And the beauty of it?

No one gets left behind.

No one gets a head start.

Together we rise—dead and living saints—in one triumphant gathering.

This is the doctrine that **comforts** us in grief. This is the truth that keeps the Church looking up, not looking around.

VII. Comfort in the Face of Death

Why did Paul tell them all this?

Because they were grieving.

Because they were confused.

Because they were afraid that those who had died might miss out.

Paul didn't scold them for their emotions. He didn't dismiss their sorrow. He answered it with **doctrine.**

In a world that thinks comfort comes from clichés or distractions, the Bible shows us that **true comfort comes from truth.**

- **Jesus rose.**
- **They will rise.**
- **We will rise.**
- **And we will be with Him forever.**

That's not just a slogan—it's Scripture.

And that's what this generation needs. Not another feel-good quote. Not another social media meme.

We need a **sound mind**, anchored in sound doctrine.

VIII. The Sleeping Saints Shall Rise – Why This Must Be Preached

There's a reason Satan hates the doctrine of the rapture.

There's a reason it's mocked, twisted, and ignored.

Because it gives the Church **comfort, courage, and clarity**.

It reminds us:

- This world is not our home.
- Death is not our master.
- The grave is not our final resting place.
- Our bodies will rise.
- Our faith is not in vain.
- And our Savior is coming soon.

If the rapture is neglected, the Church becomes earthbound.

If the resurrection is doubted, the gospel is crippled.

If the sleeping saints are forgotten, **our hope becomes hollow**.

But when this doctrine is preached—boldly, clearly, and tenderly—it **comforts the grieving, strengthens the weary, and keeps the Church watching**.

Final Thoughts

The sleeping saints are not gone.

They're not lost.

They're not forgotten.

They're asleep in Jesus.

And soon—maybe sooner than we think—**they will rise**.

At the trumpet sound...

At the shout from heaven...

At the voice of the archangel...

They will be raised.
We will be changed.
We will rise **together**.

And we will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

This is our comfort.
This is our doctrine.
This is our hope.

Let the sleeping saints rest—but know this: they won't sleep forever.

3 of 12: When the Trumpet Sounds – With a Shout, With a Voice, With a Trumpet: Hearing the Call of the Bridegroom

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.”

—1 Thessalonians 4:16 (KJV)

There are verses in Scripture that demand reverence just by reading them aloud. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 is one of them. You don't just read this verse—you feel it. It thunders off the page with prophetic majesty. It echoes into the soul of every believer with anticipation, clarity, and unspeakable joy.

This is the call of the Bridegroom. This is not metaphor or parable. This is **the moment the Church has been waiting for since Pentecost**. The moment where heaven touches earth—not in judgment, but in redemption. Not in wrath, but in reunion.

This verse is layered, rich with doctrinal significance and devotional power. In this essay, we will explore **three distinct elements** of this divine moment: **the shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God**. Each is not just noise—they are **signals**, divinely timed, prophetically planned, and filled with meaning.

We are not left to wonder when our redemption draws nigh. We are told that **when these three sounds are released**, the dead in Christ shall rise first. Let us lean in, quiet every distraction, and listen with spiritual ears—because the trumpet is not just for information. It's for **transformation**.

I. “The Lord Himself Shall Descend” – The Bridegroom Is Coming

The verse opens with one of the most tender and triumphant statements in all of Scripture:

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven...”

He’s not sending Moses.

He’s not dispatching angels.

He’s not sending prophets.

He is coming Himself.

This detail matters. It tells us of the personal nature of this moment. The One who died for us, who rose for us, who intercedes for us—**He will come for us.**

This isn’t the Second Coming where He sets foot on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4). That event is public, apocalyptic, and tied to Israel’s national repentance. This is **the rapture**—a private event for the Church, a meeting **in the air**, not on the ground.

The Groom doesn’t send a servant for the bride. He comes Himself.

And He descends not with silence—but with **three divine sounds**, each one loaded with significance.

II. “With a Shout” – The Cry of the Bridegroom

The first sound is **a shout.**

The Greek word is *keleusma*, used in ancient military and nautical contexts for a **commanding cry**, like that of a general or a captain summoning troops. It was a voice that **initiated movement**, stirred action, or announced arrival.

This is not a whisper. This is not background noise. This is **a royal summons.**

Think of John 11, when Jesus stood outside the tomb of Lazarus and **cried with a loud voice**, “Lazarus, come forth!” And what happened? The dead man walked out, bound hand and foot, responding to the voice of his Creator.

This shout in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 is **just like that—but on a cosmic scale.**

- It’s **personal** – Only the Bride will hear it.
- It’s **powerful** – It raises the dead.
- It’s **prophetic** – It fulfills the promise of John 14:3: “I will come again, and receive you unto myself.”

This shout will awaken the dead in Christ, call the living saints to rise, and **announce the arrival of the Bridegroom** for His beloved.

This is not just sound—it is **signal**. A call to rise. A divine alarm clock that no grave can silence.

III. “With the Voice of the Archangel” – Heaven’s Ambassador Speaks

The second sound mentioned is **the voice of the archangel**.

Nowhere else in the Bible is the title "archangel" used in the singular except in reference to **Michael** (Jude 1:9). Michael is presented in Scripture as a warrior—defending Israel, fighting spiritual battles, and standing against principalities.

But what is he doing at the rapture?

His presence tells us this is not just a wedding moment—it’s **a wartime extraction**.

Remember Revelation 12:7, where Michael and his angels fought against the dragon? There is heavenly warfare tied to end-time events. As the Church is caught up, Michael’s voice may be announcing the **transfer of authority**, the **prelude to war**, or the **final call for heavenly movement**.

Some possibilities for this voice include:

- A **declaration to the hosts of heaven** to prepare for the next phase of God’s plan.
- A **formal escort** of the Bride by heaven’s highest-ranking messenger.
- A **guarded passage**, protecting the saints as they are snatched from Satan’s domain.

We may not know every detail—but we know this: **heaven will not be silent**.

The shout comes from the Lord.

The voice comes from the archangel.

The entire realm of the spirit **echoes with movement**.

The Bride is going up.

And the gates of hell will do nothing to stop it.

IV. “With the Trump of God” – The Final Call for the Church

The third sound is the **trump of God**.

This trumpet is not an angelic instrument, like those in the Book of Revelation. This is **God's trumpet**—used to summon, to gather, and to separate.

Throughout the Bible, trumpets served three major purposes:

1. **To gather God's people.**
2. **To warn of war or judgment.**
3. **To announce divine visitation or movement.**

Let's examine each:

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In Numbers 10, Moses was instructed to make two silver trumpets for calling the assembly and directing their journey. The trumpet wasn't just noise—it was **direction**. It told God's people to move.

Likewise, this trumpet tells the Body of Christ:

It's time to move.

Not geographically, but eternally.

Not by foot, but **in the air**.

This is the trumpet that gathers the Bride.

2. Warning of War

In Joel 2:1, the trumpet warned of coming judgment:

“Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain...”

This trumpet in 1 Thessalonians **precedes the tribulation**. It is **not** one of the seven trumpets in Revelation, which are sounded by angels and tied to wrath.

This trumpet is a **call to rise before the wrath begins**—confirming what Paul writes later in 1 Thess. 5:9:

“For God hath not appointed us to wrath...”

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When God descended on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19), the trumpet sounded **exceeding loud**.

This was not an ordinary horn. It was a **supernatural sound** that made the people tremble.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:16, the trumpet sounds not to make people tremble in fear—but to cause graves to tremble with glory.

The dead rise.

The living change.

And heaven's symphony erupts.

V. The Divine Sequence of Glory

Let's put it all together.

This verse outlines the rapture with divine choreography:

- **The Lord Himself** – No substitute. Christ descends.
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- **With the trump of God** – The signal of divine gathering.
- **And the dead in Christ shall rise first** – Resurrected, glorified, victorious.

It is personal.

It is precise.

It is promised.

There is no hesitation. No error. No confusion.

The Bridegroom will not delay.

The trumpet will not be misheard.

The Church will not miss the moment.

VI. Hearing the Call of the Bridegroom – Are You Ready?

The world hears thunder.

The unbeliever hears nothing.

The scoffer rolls his eyes.

But the Bride... **she hears everything.**

She is not asleep. She is watching. Listening. Waiting.

In the Jewish wedding tradition, the bridegroom would come **at midnight**, often unannounced, with a shout: “Behold, the bridegroom cometh!” And the bride, already prepared, would rise, trim her lamp, and follow him into the wedding.

This is the Church’s moment.

This is **our midnight cry**.

The shout.

The voice.

The trumpet.

These are not warnings—they’re invitations.

They’re not threats—they’re **wedding bells**.

VII. The World Below and the Bride Above

While the Church is rising, the world will be reeling.

The moment the trumpet sounds, the Church is removed—and the restraint on lawlessness is gone.

The Spirit-indwelt Body of Christ, holding back the flood of wickedness, is taken out of the way (2 Thess. 2:7).

While we rise...

- The Antichrist rises.
- The seals begin to open.
- Judgment begins to pour.

But not for us.

The shout is not for judgment—it’s for **joy**.

The trumpet is not to warn us—it’s to **welcome us**.

The voice is not of war—but of **wedding**.

And Jesus descends—not in wrath, but in love—to collect His Bride and bring her home.

VIII. Let the Sound of Heaven Anchor You

Why does this matter?

Because many believers are weary.
Because many have stopped listening.
Because some have let the world drown out the voice of heaven.

This verse brings us back.

It reminds us that:

- **Jesus is coming.**
- **The Church is leaving.**
- **The world is racing toward wrath.**
- **And the shout, voice, and trumpet are ready.**

This is not a fable.

This is not allegory.

This is the **most glorious moment in Church history**—and it hasn't happened yet.

But it will.

And when it does, may you be found watching, listening, ready.

Final Thoughts

We are not waiting for a sign.

We are not waiting for a political event.

We are not waiting for a world war.

We are waiting for **a sound**.

Three sounds, actually:

1. The shout of our Savior.
2. The voice of the archangel.
3. The trumpet of God.

That's all it will take.

And in a moment...

In the twinkling of an eye...

We'll be gone.

That's not fear. That's **faith**.

That's not fantasy. That's **future**.

That's not strange doctrine. That's **sound doctrine**.

Are your ears tuned to heaven?

Because the next sound you hear... **might just be the call of the Bridegroom**.

3 of 12: When the Trumpet Sounds – With a Shout, With a Voice, With a Trumpet: Hearing the Call of the Bridegroom

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.”

—1 Thessalonians 4:16 (KJV)

There are verses in Scripture that demand reverence just by reading them aloud. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 is one of them. You don't just read this verse—you feel it. It thunders off the page with prophetic majesty. It echoes into the soul of every believer with anticipation, clarity, and unspeakable joy.

This is the call of the Bridegroom. This is not metaphor or parable. This is **the moment the Church has been waiting for since Pentecost**. The moment where heaven touches earth—not in judgment, but in redemption. Not in wrath, but in reunion.

This verse is layered, rich with doctrinal significance and devotional power. In this essay, we will explore **three distinct elements** of this divine moment: **the shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God**. Each is not just noise—they are **signals**, divinely timed, prophetically planned, and filled with meaning.

We are not left to wonder when our redemption draws nigh. We are told that **when these three sounds are released**, the dead in Christ shall rise first. Let us lean in, quiet every distraction, and listen with spiritual ears—because the trumpet is not just for information. It's for **transformation**.

I. “The Lord Himself Shall Descend” – The Bridegroom Is Coming

The verse opens with one of the most tender and triumphant statements in all of Scripture:

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven...”

He’s not sending Moses.

He’s not dispatching angels.

He’s not sending prophets.

He is coming Himself.

This detail matters. It tells us of the personal nature of this moment. The One who died for us, who rose for us, who intercedes for us—**He will come for us.**

This isn’t the Second Coming where He sets foot on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4). That event is public, apocalyptic, and tied to Israel’s national repentance. This is **the rapture**—a private event for the Church, a meeting **in the air**, not on the ground.

The Groom doesn’t send a servant for the bride. He comes Himself.

And He descends not with silence—but with **three divine sounds**, each one loaded with significance.

II. “With a Shout” – The Cry of the Bridegroom

The first sound is **a shout**.

The Greek word is *keleusma*, used in ancient military and nautical contexts for a **commanding cry**, like that of a general or a captain summoning troops. It was a voice that **initiated movement**, stirred action, or announced arrival.

This is not a whisper. This is not background noise. This is **a royal summons**.

Think of John 11, when Jesus stood outside the tomb of Lazarus and **cried with a loud voice**, “Lazarus, come forth!” And what happened? The dead man walked out, bound hand and foot, responding to the voice of his Creator.

This shout in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 is **just like that—but on a cosmic scale**.

- It’s **personal** – Only the Bride will hear it.
- It’s **powerful** – It raises the dead.
- It’s **prophetic** – It fulfills the promise of John 14:3: “I will come again, and receive you unto myself.”

This shout will awaken the dead in Christ, call the living saints to rise, and **announce the arrival of the Bridegroom** for His beloved.

This is not just sound—it is **signal**. A call to rise. A divine alarm clock that no grave can silence.

III. “With the Voice of the Archangel” – Heaven’s Ambassador Speaks

The second sound mentioned is **the voice of the archangel**.

Nowhere else in the Bible is the title "archangel" used in the singular except in reference to **Michael** (Jude 1:9). Michael is presented in Scripture as a warrior—defending Israel, fighting spiritual battles, and standing against principalities.

But what is he doing at the rapture?

His presence tells us this is not just a wedding moment—it’s **a wartime extraction**.

Remember Revelation 12:7, where Michael and his angels fought against the dragon? There is heavenly warfare tied to end-time events. As the Church is caught up, Michael’s voice may be announcing the **transfer of authority**, the **prelude to war**, or the **final call for heavenly movement**.

Some possibilities for this voice include:

- A **declaration to the hosts of heaven** to prepare for the next phase of God’s plan.
- A **formal escort** of the Bride by heaven’s highest-ranking messenger.
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4 of 12: When the Trumpet Sounds – Caught Up Together: The Gathering of the Saints in the Air

“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

—1 Thessalonians 4:17 (KJV)

This is the moment we've been waiting for.

The culmination of the mystery revealed to Paul.

The climax of the Church's earthly journey.

The great reunion of the living and the dead in Christ.

The moment when **time gives way to eternity**, and **faith becomes sight**.

The catching away of the saints is not poetic metaphor. It is not symbolic language. It is the literal fulfillment of a literal promise by a literal Savior—**“I will come again, and receive you unto myself”** (John 14:3).

This fourth essay in our twelve-part series, *When the Trumpet Sounds*, centers on **1 Thessalonians 4:17**—one of the clearest and most powerful passages in all of Scripture about the rapture of the Church. Here we find the doctrine of **harpazo**—the sudden, supernatural seizing of the Body of Christ from the earth. It is a doctrine steeped in hope, surrounded by comfort, and built upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We will examine the verse word by word, exploring its meaning, harmonizing it with the rest of Scripture, and rightly dividing it from the Second Coming of Christ. This is more than an event—it is a transformation. A transition. A homecoming. A wedding march.

Let us walk through the verse slowly, as one walks down an aisle toward a Groom.

I. “Then We Which Are Alive and Remain” – The Generation That Shall Not See Death

Paul begins with a promise for the **living**:

“Then we which are alive and remain...”

This phrase is more than poetic. It is prophetic. Paul, though he did not know the day or hour, included himself among those who **might live to see this moment**. The early Church believed in **imminency**—that Christ could return **at any moment**.

And we, 2,000 years later, still live under that same expectancy. Nothing has changed in God’s timetable. Every generation is called to **watch**, to be ready, to live as if this were **the generation that would never see death**.

Jesus said in John 11:26:

“Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”

Do you?

The rapture is not merely a rescue for the dying—it is a reward for the watching. Those who are alive and remain are not second-class Christians. They are part of the greatest miracle since the resurrection—**the translation of the Church**.

This is a group described in 1 Corinthians 15:51–52:

“We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye...”

What generation will this be?

Only God knows.

But we are closer now than Paul was when he wrote these words.

And someone will be that generation.

II. “Shall Be Caught Up” – The Doctrine of *Harpazo*

This is the heartbeat of the verse:

“Shall be caught up...”

The Greek word here is **harpazo**—a word full of action, energy, and urgency. It means:

- To seize by force.
- To snatch away suddenly.
- To take for oneself, eagerly.

- To carry off, with decisive strength.

This is **where we get the term "rapture"**—from the Latin *rapturo*, which translates *harpazo* in the Vulgate. Though critics point out the word "rapture" isn't in the English Bible, they miss the point entirely. The **concept is unmistakably biblical**.

This word is used several times in the New Testament:

- In Acts 8:39, Philip is “caught away” by the Spirit after baptizing the Ethiopian eunuch.
- In 2 Corinthians 12:2, Paul speaks of being “caught up to the third heaven.”
- In Revelation 12:5, the male child (Christ) is “caught up to God and to His throne.”

In every case, **harpazo** describes a sudden, divine, and forceful relocation.

This is not symbolic. It is **literal, physical, and transformational**.

The Church is not drifting away.

We're not floating into glory.

We are **snatched out of this world by the power of God**, bypassing death, defeating decay, and joining the risen saints in an eternal celebration.

III. “Together with Them” – Reunion with the Dead in Christ

This next phrase is breathtaking:

“Caught up **together with them...**”

Who is the “them”?

The saints who were just raised from the dead in the previous verse—**the dead in Christ**. Those who died believing in Jesus, from the thief on the cross to the last believer buried before the trumpet sounds, are raised in glorified bodies and reunited with us.

This is **the first universal gathering of the entire Body of Christ**—not in a cathedral, not in a stadium, but in the skies.

Think about this:

- Paul will be there.
- Peter will be there.
- Your grandmother will be there.

- The missionary who died unknown will be there.
- Every faithful pastor. Every martyred saint. Every praying mother. Every born-again child.

And **you**.

There will be no division, no denominations, no debates—just **one Body, finally together**.

This is not just resurrection.

This is **reunion**.

IV. “In the Clouds” – The Location of the Gathering

“In the clouds...”

This may seem poetic, but it is remarkably consistent with Scripture.

Clouds in the Bible often signify **God’s presence, movement, or glory**:

- God led Israel by a cloud (Exodus 13:21).
- Jesus ascended into a cloud (Acts 1:9).
- He will return **in the clouds** (Revelation 1:7).
- The cloud overshadowed the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:5).

To be caught up **in the clouds** is to be enveloped in divine presence. This is not a meteorological report—it’s a **heavenly location marker**.

We’re not meeting Jesus on the earth.

We’re not being brought into Jerusalem.

We are meeting Him **in the air**—in the clouds—a sign that this is not the Second Coming, but the **rapture**.

V. “To Meet the Lord in the Air” – The Marriage Meeting

This phrase seals the joy:

“To meet the Lord in the air...”

We're not meeting an angel.
We're not meeting a prophet.
We are meeting **the Lord**.

And not just spiritually. **Physically**.
Our glorified eyes will behold His glorified face.

This is the fulfillment of John 14:3:

“I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

This is the moment the Groom receives the Bride.

In Jewish tradition, the bridegroom would leave his father's house, travel to the bride's home, take her with him, and bring her back for the wedding celebration.

That's what Jesus is doing.

- He left heaven.
- He comes to receive us.
- He brings us back for the marriage supper of the Lamb.

We meet Him **in the air**, not on earth.

That distinction is essential—and it separates this event from the **Second Coming**.

VI. “So Shall We Ever Be with the Lord” – Eternity Begins

“And so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

This is the goal.
This is the glory.
Not the escape—but the **embrace**.

We don't rapture to a location.
We rapture to a **person**.

He is the reward.
He is the prize.
He is the destination.

From this point on, there is no more separation, no more faith without sight, no more “longing to see.”

It's over.

The Bride is with the Groom forever.

VII. Harpazo vs. The Second Coming – Rightly Dividing the Word

It is absolutely vital that we distinguish this event—the **rapture**—from the **Second Coming** of Christ, which happens **after** the tribulation.

Here are the differences:

Feature	Rapture	Second Coming
For whom?	The Church	Israel & the world
Where?	In the air	To the earth (Zech. 14:4)
Timing	Before Tribulation	After Tribulation
Nature	Deliverance	Judgment
Imminency	Any moment	After many signs
Tone	Joy, reunion	War, wrath

At the rapture, Christ comes **for** His saints.

At the Second Coming, He comes **with** His saints (Revelation 19:14).

At the rapture, we go **up**.

At the Second Coming, He comes **down**.

Confusing these events leads to fear, faulty doctrine, and hopelessness.

But when rightly divided, **clarity returns, hope abounds, and the Church stays ready.**

VIII. Why This Doctrine Must Be Preached Again

Satan hates this doctrine.

False teachers twist it.

Worldly churches ignore it.

Scholars over-complicate it.

Scoffers mock it.

But the Bible declares it.
The saints love it.
And the Spirit confirms it.

The rapture is real.

The harpazo is near.

And the gathering in the clouds is coming.

This isn't escapism. It's the **glorious appearing of our great God and Savior** (Titus 2:13).

When this doctrine is lost, the Church gets worldly.

When it's recovered, the Church looks up again.

IX. How to Live in Light of This Hope

If this verse is true—and it is—how then should we live?

- **Watchfully** – Always expecting His return (Mark 13:35).
- **Worshipfully** – Keeping your eyes on the prize.
- **Faithfully** – Serving with urgency, not sloth.
- **Joyfully** – Knowing death is not the end.
- **Doctrinally sound** – Teaching the truth rightly divided.

Paul ends this entire section not with debate, but with a command:

“Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” (1 Thess. 4:18)

The rapture is not a fringe idea.

It is **pastoral doctrine**.

It is **emotional medicine**.

It is **prophetic truth**.

And it is coming.

Final Thoughts

The gathering of the saints is not a dream—it's a date on God's calendar.

There will be a shout.

There will be a trumpet.

There will be a transformation.

There will be a reunion.

And there will be a meeting in the clouds that ends all sorrow, all separation, and all waiting.

We shall be caught up.

We shall meet Him in the air.

And so shall we ever be with the Lord.

This is not just our exit.

This is our **entrance**—into eternal fellowship, unspeakable joy, and everlasting union with our Savior.

The Church isn't just waiting for a kingdom.

We're waiting for **Him**.

And He's coming.

5 of 12: When the Trumpet Sounds – Comfort One Another: The Rapture as Pastoral Medicine

“Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

—1 Thessalonians 4:18 (KJV)

There's a unique kind of silence that hovers around the grieving heart. A silence not even music can fill. When loss lays its hand on your chest and you stare into the empty seat where a loved one once sat, what can words possibly do?

It's in this moment, in the heaviness of life's most bitter chapters, that 1 Thessalonians 4:18 lands like a divine whisper:

“Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

Not just “comfort one another.”

But: “Comfort one another **with these words**.”

The rapture isn't just theology—it's **therapy**.

Not just doctrine—it's **divine medicine** for the bruised soul.

This fifth essay in our twelve-part series, *When the Trumpet Sounds*, dives into the pastoral heartbeat of the rapture. We've explored the sequence of resurrection, the sounds of glory,

and the moment of being caught up. Now we slow down. Now we look around. Because Paul doesn't end with a timeline—he ends with a **touch**.

The rapture isn't meant to confuse.

It's meant to **comfort**.

And the saints in Thessalonica weren't crying out for charts and graphs. They were asking:

- “Will I ever see them again?”
- “Did they miss the Lord's return?”
- “Am I next?”
- “What happens to those who died in Christ?”

God, through Paul, answers not just with **facts**, but with **feeling**—not just a statement, but a **salve**.

Let's unfold what it means to “comfort one another with these words,” and discover why the rapture isn't only a glorious event—it's **pastoral medicine for the weary, the grieving, and the waiting**.

I. Comfort Is a Command, Not a Suggestion

“Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” (1 Thess. 4:18)

The word “wherefore” connects everything Paul just said—from verse 13 to 17—to this powerful command: **comfort one another**.

This is not optional. It's not something we do if we feel like it. It's a **divine instruction**. Why?

Because God knows what grief can do to a believer.

- It can create doubt.
- It can dim our view of eternity.
- It can isolate.
- It can shake faith.

So Paul gives pastors, teachers, and every believer a **ministry tool: use these words to comfort one another**.

And what are “these words”?

The verses we've studied:

- Jesus is coming.
- The dead in Christ will rise.
- We will be caught up together.
- We will meet the Lord in the air.
- We will always be with Him.

Comfort flows not from personality, but from **Scripture**.
Not from opinion, but from **prophetic truth**.

II. The Rapture Speaks to the Grieving

The Thessalonian church was young, persecuted, and struggling with real questions about death. Their hope had been jarred by funerals. Loved ones had died—perhaps unexpectedly, violently, or from persecution—and they wondered:

“If Jesus is coming... what about those who already died?”

Paul’s pastoral answer?

They haven’t missed a thing.

In fact, they’ll rise first.

And **you’ll be reunited**.

This is why the rapture is such a powerful doctrine for the grieving:

- It doesn’t deny sorrow—it **transforms** it.
- It doesn’t erase the pain—but it **gives it purpose**.
- It doesn’t remove loss—but it **overcomes it with reunion**.

This is **emotional medicine**.

There’s a reason Paul doesn’t say, “Don’t cry.”

He says, “Cry with **hope**.”

That hope? The return of Jesus and the resurrection of the saints.

III. Comfort for the Persecuted Church

The early believers weren't just grieving—they were **suffering**. Christianity wasn't comfortable. It was **costly**.

These saints faced:

- Imprisonment.
- Beatings.
- Slander.
- Loss of homes.
- Execution.

To them, the return of Christ wasn't academic—it was **everything**.

They didn't say, "Is the rapture pre-trib, mid-trib, or post-trib?"

They said, "When will our suffering end? When will Jesus come?"

And Paul's answer?

"He's coming. And He's bringing your reward with Him. And those who've died are already with Him. And you'll meet them in the air."

That's **encouragement**. That's **comfort** to the persecuted.

And it still is.

Today, as persecution increases globally, the Church needs this doctrine more than ever—not just to endure suffering, but to overcome it with hope.

IV. Why Comfort Must Come from "These Words"

Paul doesn't say, "Comfort one another with kind thoughts."

He says, "Comfort one another with **these words**."

Why?

Because there is **power in prophecy**—especially when it's **rightly divided** and **rightly applied**.

Comfort doesn't come from:

- Abstract theology.
- Vague sentimentalism.

- Denominational traditions.

Comfort comes from **the Word of God**.

“These words” in verses 13–17 are:

- Clear.
- Literal.
- Specific.
- Hope-filled.

They outline:

- The **resurrection of the dead in Christ**.
- The **harpazo**—the catching away of the Church.
- The **meeting in the clouds**.
- The **forever union with Christ**.

These are not filler verses.

These are the **antidote to despair**.

When we fail to comfort others with these words, we rob them of the very medicine God prescribed.

V. The Rapture and Emotional Healing

Let’s be honest: grief can crush a soul. Doubt can haunt the best of us. Questions about eternity often surface not in seminary, but in **cemeteries**.

When you stand beside the casket of a loved one who knew Christ, something shifts inside you. You either fall into despair, or you reach for **a deeper hope**.

The rapture is that hope.

- It tells the widow: “You’ll see him again.”
- It tells the mother: “Your child is not lost.”
- It tells the martyr’s family: “This is not the end.”
- It tells the anxious: “Jesus is coming.”

- It tells the broken: “He will make all things new.”

This is not emotional manipulation.

It’s not escapism.

It is **emotional healing through revealed truth**.

And it works.

Because truth sets people free.

VI. The Church Has Neglected This Medicine

Many pulpits today avoid prophecy. They fear it’s too controversial, too complicated, too misunderstood.

But in doing so, they rob their people of **comfort**.

Instead of hope, the Church is fed:

- Pragmatism.
- Entertainment.
- Behavioral sermons.
- Guilt-driven motivation.

But what about the saint who’s dying?

What about the parent burying their child?

What about the missionary under threat of death?

What about the believer in tears, saying, “Lord, how long?”

They don’t need cute. They need comfort.

And not just from a person—but from **these words**.

Paul didn’t suggest comfort. He commanded it.

The doctrine of the rapture should be preached:

- At funerals.
- In hospital rooms.
- In prison cells.
- From pulpits.

- In youth groups.
- Around dinner tables.

It's not reserved for prophecy conferences—it's **for everyday Christians**.

VII. The Rapture Keeps Us Anchored

Life is turbulent. But the promise of the rapture **anchors us**.

Hebrews 6:19 says:

“Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast...”

Hope isn't vague—it's **doctrinal**.

We are anchored because:

- Death isn't final.
- Suffering isn't forever.
- We won't miss the moment.
- We won't be appointed to wrath.
- And Jesus is preparing a place for us.

In the midst of trials, storms, and loss, the rapture doctrine shouts:

“He's coming. Hold on. It's going to be worth it.”

VIII. What Real Comfort Sounds Like

When Paul says “comfort one another,” he doesn't mean:

- “They're in a better place.”
- “At least they're not suffering.”
- “He was a good man.”

He means:

“Jesus is coming. He will raise the dead. We will be reunited. We will be changed. And we will be with the Lord forever.”

That's **comfort with content**.

That's **prophecy with purpose**.

That's **doctrine doing its job**.

Let's not sentimentalize death.

Let's **proclaim resurrection**.

Let's not whisper empty platitudes.

Let's **declare the trumpet**.

The world offers comfort through distraction.

Christ offers comfort through **promise**.

IX. The Ministry of Mutual Comfort

Notice Paul doesn't say, "Let the pastor comfort everyone."

He says, "Comfort one another."

This is a **shared responsibility**.

Every believer should:

- Know these verses.
- Speak these words.
- Use this hope.
- Comfort others in times of pain.

You don't need a degree. You need **a Bible** and **a burden**.

We're not meant to grieve alone.

We're not meant to figure out eternity in isolation.

God gave us each other.

And He gave us **these words**.

When a brother is weary—quote verse 17.

When a sister is broken—read verse 14.

When a friend is dying—declare verse 15.

This is **body ministry**, and it's beautiful.

X. Why Comfort and Clarity Belong Together

There is no true comfort without clarity.

That's why rightly dividing the Word matters. If we confuse:

- The rapture with the Second Coming,
- The Church with Israel,
- Or grace with judgment,

...then comfort collapses under fear.

But when we preach the rapture **as Paul taught it**—a sudden, pre-tribulational, resurrection-reunion in the clouds—**hope becomes unshakable.**

And the Church stops fearing the end.

Instead, she starts **listening for the trumpet.**

Final Thoughts

We are not just waiting.

We are **comforting one another** with the truth of what's coming.

- The Lord Himself will descend.
- The dead in Christ shall rise first.
- We who are alive and remain shall be caught up together.
- We will meet the Lord in the air.
- We will be with Him forever.

Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Not your words.

Not your best guess.

These words.

Because **these words heal.**

These words restore.

These words sustain.

These words **save.**

So take them. Speak them.
And let the weary find peace again.

6 of 12: When the Trumpet Sounds – But of the Times and Seasons: How the Rapture Is Not Appointed to Wrath

“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.”

—1 Thessalonians 5:1–3 (KJV)

In every generation, there have been watchers—men and women of God, eyes lifted to the sky, hearts stirred with anticipation, listening for the trumpet. But in our day, that expectation is either dismissed as fanaticism or drowned in endless speculation.

But Paul’s words here in 1 Thessalonians 5 cut through the noise.

They don’t point us to prediction.

They point us to **preparation**.

Not to terror, but to **truth**.

Not to guesswork, but to **grounded hope**.

This sixth essay in the *When the Trumpet Sounds* series focuses on a pivotal distinction: the **contrast between the sudden destruction that comes in the Day of the Lord and the blessed hope that precedes it**. The Church, Paul insists, is **not appointed to wrath** (v. 9, which we’ll explore more in the next entry). But here, in verses 1–3, he begins to draw a line between **them and us**, between **destruction and deliverance**, between the **world’s nightmare** and the **Church’s departure**.

Let’s walk through this text phrase by phrase, clarifying why the rapture is not part of God’s wrath, but a **rescue before the storm**.

I. “But of the Times and the Seasons” – What They Already Knew

“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.” (v. 1)

Paul begins this section not by introducing a new idea, but by referencing what the Thessalonians already understood.

- “Times” (Greek: *chronos*) refers to general chronology—years, eras, dispensations.
- “Seasons” (Greek: *kairos*) refers to **appointed windows of divine activity**—moments in God’s prophetic calendar.

Paul had evidently taught these believers about the **prophetic timeline**. He didn’t leave them in the dark. He spoke plainly about the resurrection, the rapture, the Day of the Lord, and the judgments to come.

And he’s not surprised they understand.

What surprises us today is that most modern Christians do **not** understand these things. In many churches, prophecy is treated like a mystery, a distraction, or an embarrassment. But Paul treated it as **essential pastoral doctrine**.

He says, “You already know the difference between the Church’s hope and the world’s destruction.”

This foundation matters—because **if you don’t distinguish the rapture from the Day of the Lord, you’ll blur deliverance with judgment**.

II. “The Day of the Lord So Cometh as a Thief in the Night” – The Coming Judgment

“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.” (v. 2)

This is not a reference to the rapture.

This is a reference to **the Day of the Lord**—a prophetic term used throughout Scripture to describe the period of God’s direct intervention in human history for judgment, beginning with the **Tribulation** and extending through the **Second Coming** and the **Millennial reign**.

Let’s clarify a few things:

A. What Is the Day of the Lord?

It’s mentioned in:

- Isaiah 13:6 – “Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.”
- Joel 2:31 – “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come.”
- Amos 5:18 – “Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord!”

It is a day of:

- **Wrath**
- **Vengeance**
- **Darkness**
- **Judgment**
- **Destruction**

It is not a day of deliverance for the Church.

It is a day of retribution for a world that has **rejected Christ**.

B. Like a Thief in the Night

This metaphor is often misused.

The rapture is sometimes preached as the thief event—but Paul uses this language specifically in reference to **judgment falling on the world**.

Jesus spoke of this too:

“But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched...” (Matt. 24:43)

Revelation 3:3 and 16:15 use similar language to describe **unbelievers being caught off guard**.

The thief doesn't bring a gift.

He brings **loss**.

The rapture is a gift.

The Day of the Lord is **a thief to the world**.

To summarize:

- The rapture is a surprise for the believer, but a **welcomed one**.
- The Day of the Lord is a surprise for the unbeliever, and a **horrific one**.

The Church doesn't dread this moment.

We're not cowering in fear.

We're looking **up**, not looking around.

III. “When They Shall Say, Peace and Safety...” – The False Security of a Fallen World

“For when they shall say, Peace and safety...” (v. 3)

Who are “they”?

Not the Church.

Not Paul’s audience.

But **the world**—those outside of Christ.

“They” are the scoffers, the indifferent, the politically deceived.

“They” are the ones who believe that human unity, global governance, and worldly tolerance will bring peace.

“They” say, “We don’t need Jesus—we have progress.”

“They” say, “We don’t need prophecy—we have politics.”

“They” say, “We don’t need heaven—we have science.”

But in the blink of an eye, **“they” will be shattered.**

A. The Lie of Peace

This false peace is precisely what the Antichrist will offer.

Daniel 8:25 says:

“And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many...”

Revelation 6:2 presents the first horseman as a false Christ—offering dominion **without bloodshed** initially.

People will cheer.

The world will applaud.

And then the seal judgments begin.

B. Sudden Destruction

“...then sudden destruction cometh upon them...”

Not warning.

Not debate.

Destruction.

The same world that mocked the rapture will wake up to the horror of the **post-rapture reality**:

- Vanished millions.

- Global panic.
- A rising tyrant.
- Economic collapse.
- Divine wrath.

This isn't fearmongering. It's **Scripture**.

The world won't slide into judgment.

It will be **snatched into it** as suddenly as the Church is snatched out of it.

IV. "As Travail Upon a Woman with Child" – The Unstoppable Nature of Wrath

Paul uses a vivid metaphor:

"...as travail upon a woman with child..."

This comparison speaks volumes.

A. It's Sudden

Labor can begin at any time. The contractions start. The signs are unmistakable.

The same with judgment. Once the Day of the Lord begins, **there is no stopping it**.

B. It's Inevitable

A woman can't say, "I don't feel like going into labor."

It comes.

Just as judgment will come.

Just as the Tribulation will be **triggered by the rapture**.

C. It's Progressive

Labor intensifies. It doesn't get easier—it grows worse until delivery.

The same is true of the Tribulation:

- Seals.
- Trumpets.
- Bowls.

Each more severe. Each more urgent.

This is not a season of revival. It is a time of **global convulsion**.

D. It Ends in Birth... But Only After Pain

The “birth” will be the **Second Coming**—when Christ returns to establish His kingdom on earth.

But until then, the world will go through seven years of unspeakable sorrow.

V. “And They Shall Not Escape” – The Final Word to the Christ-Rejecting World

“...and they shall not escape.” (v. 3)

There’s no ambiguity here.

This is not a warning with an “unless.”

This is a **verdict**.

If you’re left behind after the rapture, you are **plunged into the Day of the Lord**.

There is no evacuation.

No shelter.

No detour.

And while some will be saved during the Tribulation, **the price will be horrific**—martyrdom, persecution, and severe hardship.

But for now, there is **a way of escape**—and it’s found in the verse **before** this chapter:

“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up...” (1 Thess. 4:17)

That’s the escape.

That’s the hope.

That’s the promise.

VI. The Rapture and the Wrath: Rightly Divided

Let’s make this plain:

The Rapture	The Day of the Lord
Delivers from wrath	Begins wrath

The Rapture	The Day of the Lord
Involves the Church	Involves the world
Secret and sudden	Seen and catastrophic
Meeting in the air	Christ descends to earth
Blessed hope	Sudden destruction

Paul draws a line between “we” and “they”:

- “We” = the Church, not appointed to wrath.
- “They” = the unbelieving world, caught off guard.

If you blur this line, you blur the gospel.

If you conflate these events, you confuse the hope.

But when rightly divided, everything becomes clear.

VII. Why This Message Still Matters Today

There are two extremes in today’s Church:

1. **Fear-based prophecy teaching** – designed to scare, control, or sensationalize.
2. **Prophecy-avoidant teaching** – avoiding these topics altogether in favor of “practical living.”

But Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians shows a **third way**:

Pastoral prophecy—truth that gives comfort, clarity, and courage.

This message matters because:

- People are grieving.
- The world is shaking.
- Believers are confused.
- False teachers are multiplying.
- The end is closer than ever.

And the Church must once again proclaim:

We are not appointed to wrath.

Final Thoughts

There is a storm coming.

But before it breaks, the Church will rise.

The Day of the Lord is certain.

But so is the **day of our deliverance**.

- We will not face the thief.
- We will not feel the labor pains.
- We will not be among those crying “peace and safety.”

We will be gone.

Caught up. Transformed. Comforted.

That is the difference between **wrath** and **rapture**.

Between **they** and **we**.

Between **destruction** and **deliverance**.

May the Church stand firm in this truth.

May we comfort one another with these words.

And may we never forget:

Before wrath comes... the trumpet will sound.

7 of 12: When the Trumpet Sounds – Children of the Day: Living in Readiness

“But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.”

—1 Thessalonians 5:4–8 (KJV)

We are not in the dark.

That’s the truth Paul wanted the Thessalonian believers to grasp—not just intellectually, but spiritually, emotionally, and practically. While the world staggers in a drunken stupor of deception, distraction, and denial, the child of God is called to walk in the daylight, **clear-eyed and watchful**.

As we reach the seventh essay in this twelve-part series, *When the Trumpet Sounds*, we come to a powerful exhortation—one that shifts the focus from **prophetic clarity** to **personal responsibility**. After describing the sudden destruction that will overtake the unbelieving world (1 Thess. 5:1–3), Paul now turns to the believer, and says, “That day should not overtake you.”

Why?

Because we are **not of the night**. We are **children of the day**. And we must live like it.

This passage, 1 Thessalonians 5:4–8, brings together themes of **identity**, **alertness**, and **spiritual armor**. It is not only a contrast between believers and unbelievers—it is a **call to live like who we are**. It reminds us that watching for the rapture is not a passive posture—it’s an **active lifestyle** of spiritual sobriety.

Let us walk verse by verse through this powerful text, and discover what it truly means to be **a child of the day in a midnight world**.

I. “But Ye, Brethren, Are Not in Darkness...” – A Distinction of Destiny

“But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.” (v. 4)

This verse makes an immediate and radical distinction. Paul has just described “them”—the ones who cry “peace and safety” and are met with sudden destruction (v. 3). Now he speaks to “you”—the Church.

You are **not in darkness**.

Darkness in Scripture is associated with:

- Ignorance (Eph. 4:18)
- Sin (Rom. 13:12)
- Satan’s kingdom (Col. 1:13)
- Judgment (Ex. 10:21–23; Matt. 25:30)

To be in darkness is to be disconnected from divine truth. But the believer, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, walking in the light of the Word, **cannot be overtaken by “that day”**—the Day of the Lord, the coming wrath, the Tribulation.

Why?

Because that day is not for us.

Because **we are not appointed to wrath** (v. 9).

Because **we are children of another realm**.

Paul doesn't say, “Try to stay out of darkness.”

He says, “You are not in it.”

That's identity.

That's security.

And that's the starting point for readiness.

II. “Ye Are All the Children of Light...” – Our Spiritual Identity

“Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.” (v. 5)

Paul reminds them not of their duty—but of their **identity**.

We are:

- **Children of light** – Born of truth, walking in clarity (John 8:12).
- **Children of the day** – Living in the open, in fellowship with God.

We are **not**:

- Of the night – Not born of darkness, not belonging to it.
- Of darkness – Not aligned with evil, deception, or judgment.

This is not a motivational phrase. It is **a declaration of spiritual birthright**.

Just as a child takes on the nature of their parents, we who are born again reflect the nature of the Light of the World.

That means:

- We should **see** what's coming.

- We should **know** what to expect.
- We should **not be caught off guard**.
- We are **not in the shadows**—we walk in the **noonday sun of God’s revelation**.

Our spiritual DNA is light.

So when the world stumbles in confusion and compromise, the believer is called to shine, to watch, and to walk worthy of the daylight.

III. “Let Us Not Sleep, as Do Others...” – The Call to Wakefulness

“Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.” (v. 6)

Paul is building from identity to **action**.

Because you are a child of the day:

- **Don’t sleep.**
- **Don’t slack off.**
- **Don’t blend in.**
- **Don’t snooze your spiritual alarm.**

This “sleep” is not physical—it’s spiritual apathy.

It’s the believer who:

- Stops watching for the Lord.
- Lives as if He’s not coming.
- Gets tangled in the affairs of this life.
- Chooses entertainment over edification.
- Neglects prayer, Word, fellowship, and witness.

And sadly, many Christians today are asleep at the wheel.

- They still attend church... but they’ve lost the fire.
- They still read the Bible... but without expectation.
- They still say they believe in the rapture... but they’re not living like it could happen today.

Paul says, “Let us watch.” That word means to stay **awake, alert, and on guard.**

It’s the same Greek word used in Matthew 24:42:

“Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.”

It’s not passive. It’s passionate.

It’s not fearful. It’s focused.

It’s readiness.

IV. “They That Sleep... and They That Be Drunken...” – The Contrast of Character

“For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.”

(v. 7)

Here Paul draws a clear contrast:

- **They** = The unbelieving world.
- **We** = The believing Church.

Let’s break this down.

A. Sleep in the Night

This is the soul disconnected from divine light:

- Spiritually blind.
- Complacent.
- Unaware of eternal consequences.

The world sleeps through:

- Warnings.
- Preaching.
- Signs.
- Conviction.

They’re not watching—**they’re unconscious.**

B. Drunken in the Night

This speaks of intoxication—being overwhelmed or controlled by something other than truth.

Drunkenness in Scripture often symbolizes:

- **Spiritual delusion** (Isaiah 29:9–10)
- **Worldly influence** (Rev. 17:2)
- **Loss of judgment** (Prov. 20:1)

The world is drunk on:

- Power.
- Pleasure.
- Possessions.
- Politics.
- Pride.

And that intoxication blinds them to the **imminence of judgment**.

Paul says: Don't join them.

Don't drink from the same bottle.

Don't be spiritually buzzed on Babylon while claiming to belong to Jerusalem.

We're not of the night.

V. "Let Us Who Are of the Day Be Sober..." – Living as Light Bearers

"But let us, who are of the day, be sober..." (v. 8)

Sobriety here does not merely refer to abstaining from alcohol—it speaks of **spiritual self-control**, clarity of mind, awareness of time, and readiness of heart.

It's the opposite of:

- Panic.
- Passivity.
- Distraction.
- Delusion.

To be sober means to be:

- Focused on Christ.
- Anchored in truth.
- Discerning in a world of deception.
- Ready, not rattled.

A sober believer:

- Knows the trumpet could sound today.
- Walks in holiness.
- Is not addicted to media, trends, or applause.
- Keeps their eyes on the eastern sky and their hands to the plow.

We are not high on hype—we are grounded in hope.

We are not spiritual sleepwalkers—we are sons and daughters of the day.

VI. “Putting on the Breastplate... and Helmet” – The Armor of the Watchful

“...putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.” (v. 8)

This is the armor of the alert.

It mirrors Paul’s armor list in Ephesians 6, but here it’s trimmed down to three core essentials:

A. Breastplate of Faith and Love

The breastplate guards the **heart**—the seat of emotion, conviction, and loyalty.

Faith and love go together:

- **Faith** anchors us to God’s promises.
- **Love** connects us to others with compassion.

Faith keeps you upright.

Love keeps you useful.

Together, they protect you from the world’s cynicism, apathy, and hostility.

B. Helmet – The Hope of Salvation

The helmet protects the **mind**—your thoughts, beliefs, worldview.

Hope here is not wishful thinking—it’s **confident expectation**.

We are not hoping we’re saved—we are confidently awaiting **the full realization of our salvation**: resurrection, glorification, and eternal fellowship with Christ.

When you wear this helmet:

- You’re not tossed by every news report.
- You’re not rattled by scoffers.
- You’re not consumed with survival.
- You’re locked on the blessed hope.

This armor isn’t optional—it’s essential for spiritual readiness.

VII. Readiness Isn’t Fear—it’s Faith in Action

Some avoid rapture teaching because they say, “It’s scary.”

But Paul says, “Be sober—not scared.”

Be equipped—not anxious.

Readiness isn’t about:

- Digging a bunker.
- Hoarding supplies.
- Building timelines.

It’s about:

- Living clean.
- Loving boldly.
- Thinking clearly.
- Watching faithfully.

We’re not staying ready to avoid wrath—we’re staying ready because **we belong to the Bridegroom**, and **He could come at any moment**.

VIII. The Identity That Fuels Action

Let's return to this thought: Paul doesn't motivate by fear or guilt. He motivates by reminding us of **who we are**.

- Children of light.
- Children of the day.
- Not of darkness.
- Not appointed to wrath.
- Destined for deliverance.
- Clothed in faith, love, and hope.

That identity compels action.

Not to earn His return—but to be **found ready when He comes**.

IX. Prophetic Clarity Produces Practical Purity

Some accuse pre-trib rapture theology of creating apathy. But Scripture says the exact opposite:

“Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” (1 John 3:3)

Knowing the Lord could come at any moment doesn't make us lazy—it **makes us holy**.

It changes:

- How we treat people.
- How we spend our time.
- What we post online.
- How we pray.
- What we pursue.

Rapture readiness isn't just theology—it's a lifestyle.

Final Thoughts

We are children of the day.

We are not stumbling in darkness.

We are not drunk on delusion.

We are not doomed for destruction.

We are not caught by surprise.

We are:

- Awake.
- Watching.
- Clothed.
- Sober.
- Armed.
- Anchored.
- Alive with expectancy.

We know who we are.

We know who He is.

And we know what's coming next.

The trumpet will sound.

So until it does...

Let us not sleep.

Let us not drift.

Let us live like who we are:

Children of the day, standing in the light, waiting for the Son.

8 of 12: When the Trumpet Sounds – Not Appointed Unto Wrath: A Doctrinal Defense of Pre-Tribulation

“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.”

—1 Thessalonians 5:9 (KJV)

This verse stands like a shield wall against the rising tide of confusion. In just seventeen words, the Holy Spirit, through Paul, delivers one of the clearest, most direct, and most powerful doctrinal truths regarding the Church's future: **we are not appointed to wrath**.

No footnote. No metaphor. No ambiguity.

We are not appointed to wrath.

We are appointed to **salvation**.

And that salvation is not only spiritual, but prophetic—it includes our **rescue from the coming judgment** that will fall upon the earth during the Day of the Lord.

This eighth essay in our twelve-part series, *When the Trumpet Sounds*, confronts the heart of one of the most fiercely debated issues in eschatology: **Will the Church go through the Tribulation?**

Paul's answer in 1 Thessalonians 5:9 is an emphatic, Holy Ghost-ordained **no**.

But to rightly divide this truth, we must address two major components:

1. What is **wrath**, and how is it different from general tribulation?
2. What does it mean that the Church is **not appointed to it**?

Let us walk through the meaning of wrath, the purpose of the Tribulation, and the nature of the Church's calling in this age. And may we find our confidence not in clever arguments, but in the **unchanging Word of God**.

I. "For God Hath Not Appointed Us to Wrath..." – The Authoritative Declaration

Paul begins with a divine conclusion:

"For God hath not appointed us to wrath..."

Let's be clear: the "us" here refers to **the Church**—the body of believers saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. This isn't about Israel, or the tribulation saints, or the nations. It's about **the blood-bought Bride of Christ**, to whom Paul wrote directly.

A. The Word "Appointed"

The word "appointed" (Greek: *etethe*) means to be **destined, assigned, or set forth** for something. Paul is saying:

- We are **not destined for wrath**.
- We are **not included in the decree of destruction**.

- We are **excluded from the objects of judgment** in the coming wrath of God.

This isn't wishful thinking.

It's **sovereign truth**.

II. Understanding Wrath vs. General Tribulation

Many who argue against a pre-tribulational rapture confuse two distinct ideas: **general tribulation** and **the wrath of God**.

A. Tribulation (General)

Jesus promised believers would face tribulation:

“In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

—John 16:33

Tribulation here refers to:

- Persecution.
- Suffering.
- Trials from the world and the enemy.
- The natural result of living righteously in an unrighteous world.

The Church has always experienced tribulation:

- The early martyrs in Rome.
- The Reformation saints.
- Believers suffering in closed countries today.

This is not the wrath of God.

It is the **hatred of the world**.

B. Wrath (Prophetic)

But “wrath” in 1 Thessalonians 5:9 is not general hardship. It is **eschatological**—linked to the Day of the Lord.

It is:

- Direct.

- Divine.
- Devastating.
- Deliberate.

It includes:

- The seal judgments (Rev. 6).
- The trumpet judgments (Rev. 8–9).
- The bowl judgments (Rev. 16).
- Global catastrophes, demonic invasions, economic collapse, cosmic disturbances, and the rise of the Antichrist.

This wrath is:

- **Not from Satan.**
- **Not from man.**
- But from **God Himself**, pouring out righteous judgment on a Christ-rejecting world.

The Tribulation is not a natural disaster—it is a **supernatural sentence**.

III. The Purpose of the Tribulation – Why the Church Can’t Be Here

To understand why the Church cannot be in the Tribulation, we must understand **why it exists**.

The Tribulation, or Daniel’s 70th week (Dan. 9:24–27), serves three purposes:

1. To Judge the World

The Day of the Lord is a time of vengeance (Isaiah 13:9), a time when God punishes the world for its iniquity.

“Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate.” (Isaiah 13:9)

The Church is **not the target** of God’s wrath.
We are His children, not His enemies.

2. To Refine and Restore Israel

The Tribulation is also called “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7).

During this period:

- Israel will experience great suffering.
- A remnant will be saved (Zech. 13:8–9).
- Their eyes will be opened to their Messiah (Zech. 12:10).
- They will call on Him whom they pierced.

This is **God’s covenantal dealing with His people**, after the Church has been removed.

3. To Reveal the Antichrist and Final Apostasy

The Tribulation will unveil:

- The man of sin (2 Thess. 2:3).
- The full rejection of truth (Rev. 13).
- The consolidation of a global government and religion.

None of this has anything to do with **purifying the Bride**.

The Church is not appointed to refine the earth.

We are appointed to **reign with Christ** in glory (Rev. 3:21; 2 Tim. 2:12).

IV. “But to Obtain Salvation...” – The Contrast of Deliverance

Back to our main verse:

“But to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thess. 5:9)

Salvation here is not referring merely to the **forgiveness of sins**, but to the **fullness of deliverance**.

Paul uses the same word (*soteria*) in Romans 13:11:

“Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.”

That future salvation includes:

- The redemption of our bodies (Rom. 8:23).
- The rapture of the Church (1 Thess. 4:17).
- The escape from wrath (Rev. 3:10).

- The glorification with Christ (Col. 3:4).

It is **the full rescue package** of the believer—spirit, soul, and body.

V. The Testimony of Revelation – The Church Absent

From Revelation 4 onward, the Church **disappears from the earth** until Revelation 19.

Let's observe:

- Revelation 2–3: Jesus addresses the Church seven times.
- Revelation 4: John is caught up (a symbolic picture of the rapture).
- Revelation 6–18: Judgment after judgment falls—and the Church is **not mentioned once**.
- Revelation 19: The Bride returns with Christ **from heaven**, not from earth.

Jesus said to the Philadelphian church:

“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation...” (Rev. 3:10)

Not just out of wrath—but **from the hour** of it. From the time period itself.

That promise has **no expiration**.

It applies to every faithful member of the Church Age.

VI. The Nature of the Church – Why She Must Be Removed

The Church is described as:

- The **Body of Christ** (1 Cor. 12:27)
- The **Bride of Christ** (Eph. 5:25–27)
- A **holy temple** (Eph. 2:21)
- A **chosen generation, a royal priesthood** (1 Peter 2:9)

To say that the Church must go through the wrath of God is to say:

- The Bride must be beaten before the wedding.
- The Body must suffer before glorification.

- The Temple must be defiled before it is raised.

This contradicts the nature of God and the New Covenant.

Would a loving groom beat His bride before the marriage?

Would a High Priest pour out wrath on His own temple?

Would Christ break the Body He died to redeem?

The answer is **no**.

VII. 1 Thessalonians in Context – Building a Case

Let's remember what Paul has already told us in this epistle:

- 1 Thess. 1:10 – “Jesus... which delivered us from the wrath to come.”
- 1 Thess. 2:19 – “Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?”
- 1 Thess. 4:13–18 – The rapture, with the command to “comfort one another.”
- 1 Thess. 5:4 – “That day shall not overtake you as a thief.”
- 1 Thess. 5:9 – “Not appointed to wrath...”

This epistle builds a wall of truth:

- The wrath is coming.
- The Church is exempt.
- The Church is to be comforted.
- The Church is to be removed before judgment.

The entire structure falls apart if you insert the Church back into the Tribulation.

VIII. Testimonies from Other Epistles

The doctrine of pre-tribulation rapture is not unique to Thessalonians. It is found in harmony throughout Paul's letters:

- **Romans 5:9** – “Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”
- **Colossians 3:4** – “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.”

- **Philippians 3:20–21** – “Our conversation is in heaven... who shall change our vile body...”
- **Titus 2:13** – “Looking for that blessed hope...”

None of these passages suggest a bride bracing for impact. They suggest a **body waiting to rise**.

IX. Answering Common Objections

Some say, “God’s people have always suffered. Why should we be spared?”

Answer: We are not exempt from persecution. But we are exempt from **divine wrath**.

Some say, “The early church didn’t teach the pre-trib rapture.”

Answer: That is false. The idea of **imminency**—Christ could come at any moment—is found throughout early writings and in Scripture. Besides, doctrine is not based on history, but on **Holy Scripture rightly divided**.

Some say, “The Church needs to go through the Tribulation to be purified.”

Answer: That is a denial of the sufficiency of Christ’s blood.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus...” (Rom. 8:1)

Final Thoughts

Paul’s voice, carried by the Spirit, still rings out:

“God hath not appointed us to wrath...”

It is a stone pillar of comfort. A doctrinal lighthouse in stormy seas.

The Tribulation is real. The wrath is coming.

But the Bride won’t be here.

We’re not running to caves.

We’re rising to clouds.

We’re not bracing for bowls of judgment.

We’re looking for the **Blessed Hope**.

And before the wrath falls...

The trumpet will sound.

9 of 12: When the Trumpet Sounds – Whether We Wake or Sleep: The Unity of the Rapture Event

“Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.”

—1 Thessalonians 5:10 (KJV)

There is something stunningly beautiful in the simplicity of this verse. In one sentence, Paul captures the entire scope of the believer’s hope, the purpose of Christ’s death, and the glorious unity of the Church at the moment of the rapture.

Whether you are alive or dead—whether you’re “waking” or “sleeping” in the biblical sense—the outcome is the same for those in Christ: **you will live together with Him.**

This is not abstract theology. This is **the glue that holds the Church together**. In a world marked by division, grief, uncertainty, and the sting of death, this one verse reminds us that there is **no disunity in the rapture**. No one gets left behind. No one is forgotten. **The living and the dead in Christ rise together—unified in destiny, identity, and glory.**

In this ninth installment of the *When the Trumpet Sounds* series, we slow down to explore 1 Thessalonians 5:10, a short verse that contains **an ocean of hope**. It ties together the major themes of the previous chapters and reveals **the unity of the rapture event**—where the Bride of Christ, composed of both sleeping and living saints, rises as one Body to meet the Lord in the air.

Let us walk line by line through this verse and its implications, drawing from the rich doctrinal truths it offers and finding the deep comfort it supplies to every believer—young and old, present and past, living and departed.

I. “Who Died for Us...” – The Foundation of Our Unity

“Who died for us...”

Every truth in this verse—and indeed in the entire rapture doctrine—rests on these five words. Christ died for **us**. Not merely as a moral example. Not as a martyr. But as **a substitutionary sacrifice**.

Paul is reminding the Church:

- You are not united by race.
- You are not united by nationality.
- You are not united by denomination.
- You are not even united by your current location (heaven or earth).

You are united by **the death of Christ**.

This unity is not theoretical—it's legal and spiritual. Jesus took our sin, bore our wrath, paid our debt, and reconciled us to the Father. The rapture is possible because **the price of separation was paid in full** at the cross.

“For he is our peace, who hath made both one...” (Eph. 2:14)

This is why Paul begins with the cross. Every subsequent promise flows from it:

- The resurrection.
- The rapture.
- The glorification.
- The eternal dwelling with Christ.

No blood? No hope.

But because of His death, both the living and the dead in Christ are sealed for the same future.

II. “That, Whether We Wake or Sleep...” – The Two Groups in One Body

“...that, whether we wake or sleep...”

Here, Paul draws again from the language he used in 1 Thessalonians 4:13–15. In that passage:

- **“Sleep”** referred to believers who had died.
- **“Wake”** referred to those still alive.

This is not sleep as in unconscious soul sleep—a false doctrine—but a peaceful metaphor for death **only for the believer**, whose body rests in the grave while the soul is present with Christ (2 Cor. 5:8).

Paul uses this phrasing to make a clear distinction between two groups:

1. **The sleeping saints** – those who have died in Christ.
2. **The waking saints** – those alive at the coming of the Lord.

But the power of the passage is in what **comes next**. Because though these groups may differ **in condition**, they share the same **destination**.

There is no “first class” and “coach” in the rapture.

There is no delay for the dead, and no advantage for the living.

There is no preference for those who are alive, and no neglect of those who have passed.

We rise together. We reign together. We live together.

III. “We Should Live Together with Him” – The Outcome of Redemption

“...we should live together with him.”

This is the grand finale of the verse. The goal of redemption isn’t merely escape—it’s **eternal fellowship**.

Let’s unpack this phrase:

A. “Live”

This is not just existence—it’s **life in its fullest sense**.

It includes:

- Resurrection.
- Glorification.
- Eternal purpose.
- Joy unending.
- Sinless communion.

This is **not reincarnation**. Not spiritual floating. Not some disembodied eternity.

This is **living in glorified, incorruptible, resurrected bodies**, perfectly conformed to Christ (Phil. 3:21).

B. “Together”

The word “together” is crucial. Paul wants to drive home the truth that **no one is left behind**.

In a world shattered by death and separation, this promise stands tall:

- The mother who buried her child will rise together with that child.
- The son who watched his father die in the faith will rise together with him.
- The saints martyred across centuries will rise together with the living.
- Paul, Peter, and your praying grandmother will all rise together—with **you**.

This is **not reunion someday**—it’s **reunion in the rapture**.

C. “With Him”

And the most glorious part?

Not just with each other. But **with Him**.

This is the end goal of the Christian life—to **be with Jesus**.

We are not raptured to a place—we are raptured to a Person.

- Not merely to escape the Antichrist.
- Not just to avoid the Tribulation.
- But to **be with the Christ** who died for us.

“So shall we ever be with the Lord.” (1 Thess. 4:17)

IV. The Rapture Is a Family Event

This verse paints a picture: the rapture is not an isolated experience. It is a **family reunion**.

We often think of the rapture in individual terms:

- “Will I be ready?”
- “What if I’m the only one in my family who’s saved?”
- “What will happen to my body?”

But Paul is thinking corporately here. He’s thinking in terms of **the whole Body of Christ**—the entire Bride being caught up together, whether awake or asleep.

This means:

- No one is left behind.
- No one is separated.
- No one is less than.

The rapture is **the first time in history that every believer from Pentecost to the present will be in one place—together—with Jesus.**

V. The Theology of Togetherness

This unity is not incidental—it is **intentional**. God has always planned for His people to be gathered:

- “Gather my saints together unto me...” (Ps. 50:5)
- “I will gather them that are sorrowful...” (Zeph. 3:18)
- “He shall gather the lambs with his arm...” (Isa. 40:11)

Jesus said in John 14:3:

“I will come again, and receive you unto myself...”

He wasn’t referring to individual departures in death. He was referring to the rapture—the **corporate reception** of the Bride.

Every believer receives personal salvation.

But the rapture is **a collective fulfillment of that salvation.**

That’s why we must teach this verse not just as doctrine, but as **doxology**—a song of praise for what God will do **for His people as a whole.**

VI. This Unity Refutes Partial Rapture Theories

Some have suggested a “**partial rapture**” view—that only the spiritual, the ready, or the faithful believers will be caught up, and carnal Christians will be left behind.

But this verse **refutes** that false teaching.

Paul doesn’t say:

- “Those who are awake shall live with Him.”
- “Those who are watching will be raptured.”

He says, **“Whether we wake or sleep...”**

Not just “alive or dead” in a physical sense, but also a secondary layer—**spiritually alert or spiritually slumbering.**

While readiness is important, and while watching is a command, the rapture is based on **positional righteousness, not performance.**

You are either:

- In Christ (and going up), or
- Not in Christ (and staying here).

To say that only part of the Church will be raptured is to say that Christ's body will be **severed, His Bride torn in half.**

This is not biblical.

VII. The Comfort to the Grieving

This verse was deeply personal to the Thessalonian believers. They were grieving those who had died.

Paul's message is clear:

- “You haven't lost them forever.”
- “You're not moving toward separation—you're moving toward reunion.”
- “And not just someday in heaven—soon, at the rapture.”
- “You'll rise together—with them—with Him.”

This is not wishful thinking. It is **pastoral comfort grounded in prophetic truth.**

That's why verse 11 says:

“Wherefore comfort yourselves together...”

This is the **healing doctrine for the brokenhearted.**

VIII. The Rapture Is for All in Christ

This verse aligns perfectly with Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 15:51–52:

“We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment...”

And again in Romans 8:30:

“Whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

The rapture is not:

- A reward for spiritual maturity.
- A prize for prophetic awareness.
- A bonus for church attendance.

It is the **culmination of our salvation**—the final phase of what began the day we were born again.

From justification, to sanctification, to **glorification—whether we wake or sleep**, we will be included.

IX. The Unity of the Church’s Resurrection Identity

Some struggle to understand how the Church—spanning centuries and continents—can be “one body.”

But Scripture is clear:

- **One Lord, one faith, one baptism** (Eph. 4:5)
- **By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body** (1 Cor. 12:13)
- **That they all may be one** (John 17:21)

The rapture is the **first moment we will all be together—finally, physically, eternally.**

No more separation by:

- Denomination
- Culture
- Language
- Death

We rise as one, because we are **already one in Christ.**

X. Living in Light of This Unity

If we believe this is true—if we really believe that the trumpet will sound, and **whether we're alive or dead, we will all be gathered together with Christ**—then how should we live?

- **Gratefully** – Remembering the cross made this possible.
- **Peacefully** – Trusting that no matter what happens in this life, the end is glory.
- **Evangelistically** – Calling others to join this eternal family.
- **Joyfully** – Knowing that loved ones in Christ are not lost, only sleeping.
- **Faithfully** – Walking in a way worthy of our calling, anticipating the shout.

Final Thoughts

“Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.”

This is not just a theological statement—it's **a family promise**.

It says to the widow: “He's not gone—you'll see him again.”

It says to the persecuted: “You're not alone—you'll rise with all of us.”

It says to the weary believer: “You're not forgotten—you are part of the Bride.”

It says to the watchful saint: “Soon, you'll be with Him—and with them—forever.”

This is the unity of the rapture.

This is the hope of the Church.

This is the comfort of the gospel.

Whether we wake or sleep—we will live together with Him.

10 of 12: When the Trumpet Sounds – Edify One Another: The Rapture Is Not Escapism—it's Empowerment

“Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.”

—1 Thessalonians 5:11 (KJV)

The doctrine of the rapture has often been mischaracterized. Some label it escapism, as if it's merely a fantasy for fearful Christians trying to avoid hardship. Others reduce it to theological trivia, tucked away in prophecy conferences and debated over coffee but rarely preached from pulpits.

Yet the Apostle Paul saw it differently.

He didn't treat the rapture as escapism.

He saw it as **empowerment**.

He taught it as **a building block for a strong, vibrant, watchful Church**.

In fact, he commanded the Thessalonian believers to **comfort** and **edify one another** with this truth—not just casually, but as a regular function of fellowship and spiritual health.

This tenth essay in our twelve-part series, *When the Trumpet Sounds*, explores 1 Thessalonians 5:11 and the importance of the rapture **as a tool for edification**, not evasion. In Paul's pastoral wisdom, the coming of the Lord wasn't a fringe teaching—it was a foundational encouragement to help believers:

- Stay focused
- Remain hopeful
- Persevere under pressure
- Mature spiritually
- Love one another

And in an age where sound doctrine is rare and churches are distracted by gimmicks, feelings, and politics, the truth of Christ's imminent return is needed more than ever.

Let us walk verse by verse and heart to heart through this powerful principle: **preaching and embracing the rapture isn't an escape from reality—it's an invitation to rise above it.**

I. "Wherefore Comfort Yourselves Together..." – Shared Encouragement

"Wherefore comfort yourselves together..." (v. 11a)

The "wherefore" here ties us directly back to **everything Paul has said** about the rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:10. The resurrection of the dead in Christ, the catching away of the Church, our unity whether we wake or sleep, and the promise that **we are not appointed unto wrath**—these truths form the **foundation of our comfort**.

But notice what Paul says:

“Comfort yourselves together.”

This is a call for **mutual encouragement**, not isolated meditation.

The rapture is not just a personal hope—it is a **shared hope**. It is designed to:

- Strengthen the grieving.
- Reassure the fearful.
- Steady the persecuted.
- Reunite the scattered hearts of the saints.

The Church is to gather around this promise, not hide from it.

We are to **remind each other**—again and again—that **this world is not our home**, and that **the trumpet will sound**.

This comfort isn't escapist—it's **reality-grounding**.

II. “And Edify One Another...” – The Rapture as a Means of Growth

“...and edify one another...” (v. 11b)

The Greek word for “edify” is *oikodomeo*, which literally means “to build up, to construct a house.” In spiritual terms, it means **to strengthen, establish, and encourage spiritual growth**.

Paul isn't simply talking about feeling better. He's talking about **getting stronger**.

The doctrine of the rapture is not meant to stir **lazy anticipation**, but to inspire **holy participation**.

A church that embraces the rapture properly will grow in:

- **Holiness** – Knowing Jesus could return at any moment sharpens our purity.
- **Boldness** – Time is short; the gospel must go forth.
- **Unity** – We're all leaving together. Petty divisions must die.
- **Hope** – The world may crumble, but our future is fixed.
- **Discipleship** – We must prepare others to meet Him.

In other words, the rapture fuels **spiritual momentum**, not stagnation.

This is why Paul says it edifies the Church.

III. A Misunderstood Doctrine – Not Escapism

The critics say, “Rapture theology creates complacency. It disconnects Christians from the world. It makes them lazy, waiting for an evacuation instead of engagement.”

But nothing could be further from the truth when this doctrine is rightly taught.

Let’s dispel the myth:

A. The Rapture Doesn’t Make You Passive—It Makes You Prepared

Jesus said:

“Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.” (Matt. 24:42)

The early Church lived in a state of expectation—and they were anything but lazy. They:

- Evangelized the known world.
- Endured persecution.
- Made disciples.
- Planted churches.
- Wrote Scripture.

Their hope wasn’t that they would avoid suffering. Their hope was that **their suffering had an expiration date.**

They weren’t disengaged—they were **empowered by the urgency** of Christ’s return.

B. The Rapture Doesn’t Disconnect You from Earthly Responsibility

Paul told the Thessalonians to:

- Comfort one another (1 Thess. 4:18)
- Work with your hands (1 Thess. 4:11)
- Lead a quiet life
- Be sober and awake (1 Thess. 5:6)
- Walk honestly (1 Thess. 4:12)

The rapture didn't make them hide in caves—it made them shine in the culture. It gave their actions urgency, their words clarity, and their lives direction.

IV. The Rapture as a Purifying Hope

John wrote:

“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” (1 John 3:3)

The blessed hope is a **purifying force**.

- You don't waste time with bitterness if you might see Jesus today.
- You don't pursue sin when the trumpet could sound at any moment.
- You don't slack in prayer or witness when you know the door is about to close.

The true result of the rapture doctrine is:

- **Conviction** – “Am I ready?”
- **Compassion** – “Who do I need to reach?”
- **Concentration** – “What really matters?”

This is not escapism—it's **discipleship**.

V. Church Health Depends on Eternal Focus

Many churches today struggle with:

- Division
- Distraction
- Worldliness
- Weakness

Why?

Because they've lost the **eternal lens**.

They've stopped preaching about heaven, the return of Christ, and the judgment seat.

They've become **earthbound**.

But when the rapture is preached:

- Saints lift their eyes.
- Priorities shift.
- Carnality is challenged.
- Holiness returns.
- The Spirit moves.

The early church was strong **because it was looking up**.

Paul's letters were filled with eschatology **not to stir debate, but to strengthen believers**.

The modern Church must return to this.

Not just preaching **for today**, but preaching **about that day**.

VI. Mutual Edification: A Community Responsibility

Paul doesn't say, "Let the preacher edify the people with this."

He says, **"Edify one another."**

This is a **mutual ministry**. Every believer has the responsibility to:

- Remind others of the Lord's return
- Speak hope into sorrow
- Strengthen the weary
- Refocus the distracted
- Rekindle the watchfulness of the Church

The rapture isn't just a sermon topic—it's a **spiritual discipline**.

We should:

- Speak about it in small groups
- Encourage it during prayer times
- Include it in songs
- Pass it on to our children
- Embed it in our church culture

This keeps the Church **watching and working**, not sleeping and drifting.

VII. The Danger of Avoiding the Rapture

When churches avoid the rapture, several things happen:

1. **Fear Increases** – The world looks more terrifying when we forget how it ends.
2. **Worldliness Grows** – Without a sense of urgency, believers become entangled in the world.
3. **Doctrine Weakens** – The rapture is tied to other doctrines: resurrection, glorification, sanctification. If one falls, others soon follow.
4. **Evangelism Fades** – If Christ isn't coming soon, what's the rush?
5. **Comfort Is Lost** – Believers facing death, grief, and persecution are robbed of the one promise that can carry them through.

To leave out the rapture is to **deprive the Church of her Blessed Hope**.

VIII. What Edification Looks Like in the Rapture Context

Let's get practical. How do we **edify one another** with this doctrine?

1. Teach It Consistently

Not just once a year. Make it part of your preaching rhythm.

2. Apply It Personally

Not just abstract teaching, but asking:

- “How does this affect my priorities?”
- “How should I live today if He might come tomorrow?”

3. Sing About It

Songs of hope strengthen the spirit. Bring back songs like:

- “When We All Get to Heaven”
- “Jesus Is Coming Soon”
- “The King Is Coming”

4. Counsel With It

Grief counseling, marital counseling, even youth mentorship should include the eternal perspective.

5. Disciple Through It

Teach new believers early about the rapture. Train them to live with eternity in mind.

6. Correct Gently With It

When a brother is veering, remind him:

“The Lord is at hand.” (Phil. 4:5)

IX. The Early Church's Model of Watchfulness

The early believers often greeted one another with “**Maranatha**”—an Aramaic expression meaning, “The Lord is coming.”

That wasn't superstition. It was:

- A reminder
- A comfort
- A motivator
- A correction
- A vision

They lived ready.

And the Church was never more powerful.

Let us recover that.

Not as a novelty—but as **normal Christianity**.

X. A Balanced Faith: Comfort, Sobriety, and Strength

The rapture doctrine brings balance:

- It comforts our sorrows—because this life isn't all there is.
- It sobers our spirits—because we must give account.

- It strengthens our hearts—because victory is certain.

Without it, the Church drifts.

With it, we stand.

“Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” (James 5:8)

Final Thoughts

The rapture is not escapism.

It is **expectation**.

It is **empowerment**.

It is **edification**.

It doesn't make us quit. It makes us continue.

It doesn't make us hide. It makes us shine.

It doesn't make us passive. It makes us powerful.

“Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another..”

Let the trumpet sound—not just in prophecy conferences, but in pulpits.

Let the saints be reminded—not of fear, but of **hope**.

Let the Church rise—not only when He comes—but **in spirit and truth today**, strengthened by the knowledge that **He is coming soon**.

11 of 12: When the Trumpet Sounds – The Rapture in Paul's Letters: Harmony Across the Epistles

(Romans 8, 1 Corinthians 15, Titus 2, Philippians 3:20–21)

The doctrine of the rapture did not appear suddenly in one isolated letter from Paul to the Thessalonians. While 1 Thessalonians 4–5 gives the most detailed chronological layout, the promise of the rapture pulses throughout **Paul's entire body of writings** like a golden thread sewn into every epistle.

Paul never treated the return of Christ for His Church as a side topic. For him, it was **the natural destination** of the gospel—a truth so sure, so central, and so powerful that it shaped how the Church prayed, suffered, lived, hoped, and even died. He spoke of it as **a glorious transformation, a blessed hope, and an imminent reality** that tied together past redemption with future glorification.

In this eleventh essay of our *When the Trumpet Sounds* series, we will explore the harmony of the rapture in four of Paul’s other letters: **Romans 8, 1 Corinthians 15, Titus 2, and Philippians 3:20–21.**

Though these passages vary in tone and context, they all point to the same glorious event: **the catching away of the Church**, the transformation of our bodies, and the reunion with Christ in glorified immortality.

Let us walk through each of these passages, verse by verse, to behold how Paul consistently laid out a rapture-ready, eternity-minded vision for the Church across all his writings.

I. Romans 8 – The Groaning of Creation and the Redemption of the Body

Key verses: Romans 8:18–23

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us...” (v. 18)

“...even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” (v. 23)

Paul’s teaching in Romans 8 is deeply pastoral. He is writing to believers facing suffering, weakness, and groaning in a fallen world. And what is the hope he offers them?

Glory. Transformation. Resurrection.

Here, Paul introduces the concept of **“the redemption of the body”**—not just salvation of the soul, but the **full completion of our salvation** when our earthly, corruptible bodies are exchanged for glorified ones.

This language echoes the rapture scene in 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15, where believers are instantly transformed at the coming of the Lord.

Romans 8 reminds us that:

- The rapture is not fantasy—it is **the finish line** of our adoption.
- The world is not getting better—it is **groaning**, waiting for our transformation.

- The believer is not exempt from pain—but is destined for **resurrection glory**.

The rapture is not only about **leaving the earth**—it is about **the redemption of every fiber of who we are**.

“...the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

II. 1 Corinthians 15 – The Mystery of the Transformation

Key verses: 1 Corinthians 15:51–53

“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed...”

“...in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

This passage is the **crown jewel** of Paul’s teaching on the glorification of the believer.

Let’s break it down.

A. “Behold, I Shew You a Mystery”

A “mystery” in Paul’s vocabulary is a **revealed truth that was previously hidden**.

The idea that:

- Not all saints would die, and
- Some would be transformed instantly at Christ’s coming,

...was not revealed in the Old Testament. It is part of the **Church’s unique prophetic inheritance**.

B. “We Shall All Be Changed”

This is not an allegory. It is a literal, physical, bodily transformation:

- From **mortal to immortal**
- From **corruptible to incorruptible**
- From **weakness to glory**

And it happens **in a moment**—faster than you can blink.

This is the rapture: **the dead raised**, and **the living changed**, all **at the trumpet’s blast**.

C. The Final Triumph

“Death is swallowed up in victory.” (v. 54)

The rapture is **not an escape**—it is a **victory parade**, led by Christ, conquering the final enemy: **death itself**.

It proves that:

- The grave has no claim.
- Time has no barrier.
- The curse has an end.
- And Christ’s resurrection is our guarantee.

III. Titus 2 – The Blessed Hope That Shapes Holy Living

Key verses: Titus 2:11–13

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men...”

“...teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly...”

“...Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Paul’s epistle to Titus, a pastoral letter, shows that the rapture is not just a prophecy to be debated—it is a **discipline to be lived**.

A. The Grace That Teaches

Paul ties the return of Christ to the daily life of the believer. Grace doesn’t just forgive us—it trains us. It teaches us to:

- Deny sin
- Live righteously
- Walk in godliness
- **Look for Christ’s return**

The rapture isn’t a future escape—it’s a **present motivator**.

B. The Blessed Hope

Paul calls the rapture **the blessed hope**.

Not just hope.

Not just a theological curiosity.

But **blessed**—happy, joyful, precious, purifying.

This phrase summarizes the heartbeat of Paul’s eschatology:

- It is **blessed** because it’s the Bridegroom coming for His Bride.
- It is **hope** because it is sure, not speculative.

And it is called **the appearing** of our **great God and Savior, Jesus Christ**—a bold affirmation of Christ’s deity and our imminent union with Him.

Titus 2 reminds us that **expectancy leads to excellence**.

We live cleaner because **we are looking up**.

IV. Philippians 3:20–21 – The Transformation by His Power

“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:”

“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body...”

“...according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”

This beautiful passage from Paul’s prison letter to the Philippians gives us the clearest vision of what **will happen to our bodies** at the rapture.

A. “Our Conversation is in Heaven”

The word *conversation* here means **citizenship**. Paul is reminding the Philippians that:

- Our politics aren’t earthly.
- Our allegiance is not Rome—it’s Heaven.
- Our King is returning—and **we look for Him**.

B. “Who Shall Change Our Vile Body”

This is rapture language.

The “vile body” refers to:

- Our fallen, decaying, weak, sickness-prone physical form.

Christ will **transform it** to match His **resurrected, glorified body**.

Think of that for a moment:

- No more pain
- No more sin nature
- No more aging
- No more death
- No more decay

This isn't spiritual allegory—it's **a physical miracle.**

C. "According to the Working..."

How will this happen?

By the **same power** that:

- Raised Christ from the dead
- Created the universe
- Will one day **subdue all things under His rule**

That same power will reach into every grave, every nation, every continent, and gather the saints into glorified bodies **in an instant.**

Philippians 3 completes the rapture picture with **divine precision** and **personal application.**

V. Summary: The Harmony Across the Epistles

Let us now step back and hear the harmony from Paul's writings:

Epistle	Rapture Theme	Key Emphasis
Romans 8	Groaning for glory	Redemption of the body
1 Corinthians 15	Mystery of transformation	Victory over death
Titus 2	The blessed hope	Purifying expectancy
Philippians 3	Heavenly citizenship	Glorified bodies through His power

Though written to different churches, under different circumstances, Paul's message is consistent:

Jesus is coming. We will be changed. And we must live like it.

VI. Why This Harmony Matters Today

We live in an age of:

- Doctrinal confusion
- Moral compromise
- Spiritual fatigue
- Eschatological mockery

Even in the Church, many are:

- Scoffing at prophecy
- Mocking the rapture
- Replacing hope with politics
- Replacing purity with pragmatism

But Paul's unified voice echoes through time:

- Christ is coming for His Church.
- We will be changed in a moment.
- We must live in the light of His return.
- This is not fiction—it is **blessed hope**.

This harmony gives us:

- **Doctrinal clarity**
- **Practical stability**
- **Spiritual vitality**
- **Eternal expectancy**

Final Thoughts

The rapture is not a single note—it is a symphony.

Paul didn't invent it to comfort the Thessalonians.

He preached it everywhere:

- In Rome
- In Corinth
- In Crete
- In Philippi
- In every church, to every heart, from every angle

He called it:

- A **mystery** revealed
- A **hope** that purifies
- A **transformation** by Christ's power
- A **glorious appearing** of our Savior
- A **redemption** that completes our adoption

The rapture is **not a theory**—it's the Church's coming reality.

It is not escapism—it is **divine empowerment**.

It is not optional theology—it is **central to New Testament Christianity**.

So let us echo Paul:

- **Look up**—your redemption draws near.
- **Stand fast**—your change is coming.
- **Preach boldly**—the trumpet will sound.
- **Live purely**—you are heaven-bound.
- **Encourage one another**—whether we wake or sleep, **we will live together with Him**.

Let the harmony of the epistles be the melody of our message:

The King is coming. And we shall be like Him.

12 of 12: When the Trumpet Sounds – The Final Trump: Why This Trumpet Isn't Revelation's

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God...”

—1 Thessalonians 4:16 (KJV)

“But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished...”

—Revelation 10:7 (KJV)

Few phrases in the prophetic conversation have stirred more confusion and controversy than this one: **“the last trump.”** Found in 1 Corinthians 15:52, it has been cited by many as proof that the rapture must take place **at the sounding of the seventh trumpet** in the Book of Revelation (Rev. 11:15), and therefore must be positioned **midway through the Tribulation** or later.

But that interpretation creates more problems than it solves. It forces an unnatural blending of two completely distinct timelines—Paul's teaching to the Church and John's vision concerning Israel and the nations. It ignores context, confuses purposes, and ultimately undermines the pre-tribulational hope Paul so clearly delivered to the Church.

This final essay in our twelve-part series, *When the Trumpet Sounds*, will take a deep dive into the subject of trumpets in Scripture—particularly **why the trumpet Paul refers to in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and 1 Corinthians 15:52 is not the same trumpet of Revelation 11:15.**

In doing so, we will:

1. Define the different trumpets in Scripture.
2. Contrast the trumpet of 1 Thessalonians 4 with the trumpets of Revelation.
3. Clarify the context of “the last trump.”
4. Defend the harmony of a **pre-tribulational rapture** with Scripture.
5. Equip the Church to distinguish between the **trump of God** and the **trumpet of judgment.**

Let us proceed carefully, scripturally, and boldly—for the trumpet will sound, and **it matters greatly which one we're waiting for.**

I. Trumpets in the Bible: A Multidimensional Symbol

Trumpets in Scripture are not used exclusively for one purpose. In fact, they appear throughout the Bible with **diverse meanings** depending on the context.

Here are some major uses:

A. Trumpets for Assembly

“Make thee two trumpets of silver... for the calling of the assembly...” (Num. 10:2)
Israel used trumpets to call people together—especially to **meet with the Lord** or to **mobilize for travel**.

B. Trumpets for War

“When ye blow an alarm, then the camps... shall journey...” (Num. 10:5)
“Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid?” (Amos 3:6)

Trumpets announced **impending battle** or judgment.

C. Trumpets for Worship

“With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the LORD...” (Ps. 98:6)

They accompanied praise and ceremony, often linked with **God’s presence**.

D. Trumpets for Prophetic Fulfillment

Trumpets signified **divine movement**, including:

- The Law being given at Sinai (Ex. 19:16, 19)
- The fall of Jericho (Josh. 6)
- The coronation of kings (1 Kings 1:34)

In short, trumpets in Scripture serve:

- **To summon**
- **To signal**
- **To warn**
- **To declare**

It is no surprise, then, that trumpets would feature prominently in both the **rapture of the Church** and the **judgment of the world**—but these are **distinct events with distinct trumpets**.

II. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 vs. Revelation 11:15 – A Tale of Two Trumpets

Let us now compare these two key passages:

1 Thess. 4:16 – “The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout... with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.”

Rev. 11:15 – “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven...”

A. Source of the Trumpet

- **1 Thess. 4** – It is the **trump of God**.
- **Rev. 11** – It is the **seventh trumpet blown by an angel**.

These are **not the same source**. One is divine, from God Himself; the other is **angelic**, part of a series of judgments.

B. Purpose of the Trumpet

- **1 Thess. 4** – It is to **gather** the Church—resurrection and reunion.
- **Rev. 11** – It is to **unleash judgment**, signaling the climax of wrath and the declaration of God’s kingdom.

In short:

- One is about **deliverance**.
- The other is about **destruction**.

C. Audience of the Trumpet

- **1 Thess. 4** – The audience is the **Church**—“the dead in Christ” and “we who are alive and remain.”
- **Rev. 11** – The audience is **the earth**—nations under judgment, Israel under tribulation.

D. Timing of the Trumpet

- **1 Thess. 4** – It occurs **before** the Day of the Lord and the outpouring of wrath.
- **Rev. 11** – It occurs **during** the Tribulation, at the midpoint or later.

These distinctions are clear and critical. If they are ignored or blurred, the doctrinal damage is immense.

III. The “Last Trump” of 1 Corinthians 15 – What Does It Mean?

One of the main arguments for equating the rapture with the seventh trumpet in Revelation is Paul’s phrase in **1 Corinthians 15:52**:

“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump...”

Those who reject a pre-trib rapture interpret “last trump” as the final trumpet in Revelation’s sequence.

But that interpretation fails on several grounds.

A. Paul Wrote 1 Corinthians Before Revelation Was Given

John’s Revelation was penned decades **after** 1 Corinthians. Paul’s readers had no concept of seven trumpet judgments. If “last trump” referred to Revelation 11, **it would have been meaningless to them.**

Paul wasn’t referencing a judgment trumpet. He was speaking from **Jewish, Church-age, and cultural understanding.**

B. The “Last Trump” Isn’t About Sequence in Revelation—It’s About Completion for the Church

Paul uses “last trump” in a military or ceremonial sense:

- In Roman and Jewish military practice, trumpets were used **in sequence**:
 - The **first trump** to alert and prepare.
 - The **last trump to command movement**—time to go.

In Numbers 10:6–7, the trumpet sounds **differently depending on who is moving**—but in either case, it signals **order and action.**

For Paul and his readers, “last trump” simply meant:

“The final divine signal for the Church to move.”

C. The Church Has Its Own Trumpet—Distinct from Israel’s Judgment

1 Thessalonians 4 calls it **the trump of God**, not the trump of angels or judgment.

In Revelation, trumpets unleash:

- Fire

- Hail
- Blood
- Locusts
- Darkness
- Woes

But the trumpet Paul describes unleashes:

- **Glory**
- **Resurrection**
- **Transformation**
- **Eternal reunion**

These are not the same.

IV. Theological Contradictions of Equating the Two Trumpets

If the rapture happens at the seventh trumpet in Revelation, several contradictions emerge:

1. The Church Is Promised Deliverance from Wrath

“God hath not appointed us to wrath...” (1 Thess. 5:9)

But the seventh trumpet unleashes the **bowl judgments**, the most intense expressions of God’s wrath (Rev. 15–16).

2. Paul Taught Imminency

“We shall not all sleep...” (1 Cor. 15:51)

If the rapture must wait for the seventh trumpet, then it **cannot** be imminent—it would have to follow:

- Seal judgments
- Antichrist’s rise
- Temple defilement
- Global persecution

This destroys the doctrine of **watchfulness**.

3. The Rapture Is a Mystery—Not a Fulfillment of Old Prophecy

“Behold, I shew you a mystery...” (1 Cor. 15:51)

The seventh trumpet is **clearly declared** in Revelation as part of an Old Testament prophetic framework. But the rapture is **a new revelation for the Church**, not part of Israel’s prophetic calendar.

V. The Timing Confirms It

Let’s look at what happens at the seventh trumpet:

- **Revelation 11:15–19:**
 - Nations are angry.
 - Wrath is come.
 - The temple in heaven opens.
 - The ark is seen.
 - Lightnings, voices, thunderings, earthquakes follow.

Compare that to **1 Thessalonians 4:**

- Resurrection of the dead in Christ.
- Transformation of living saints.
- A reunion in the clouds.
- Comfort, not cataclysm.

There is **no harmony** between these two events in purpose, tone, or result.

VI. Jewish Feast Typology Supports Distinction

Paul was steeped in Jewish festival understanding, and he likely alluded to the **Feast of Trumpets (Yom Teruah)** as a model for the rapture trumpet.

The Feast of Trumpets:

- Occurs in the **fall**, announcing a new year.
- Is known as the “Day no man knows” (Matt. 24:36 allusion).

- Involves **100 trumpet blasts**, with the final one called the **tekiah gedolah**—“the last trump.”

This feast typifies:

- **A call to awakening.**
- **The beginning of judgment.**
- **A hidden wedding ceremony (the bride is caught away).**

This points to the **rapture trumpet**, not the judgment trumpets of Revelation tied to **Yom Kippur** (Atonement) and **Tabernacles** (kingdom).

VII. Paul’s Consistency Protects the Church’s Hope

Throughout his letters, Paul distinguishes:

- **Wrath vs. deliverance**
- **Judgment vs. reward**
- **Revelation of Antichrist vs. mystery of resurrection**
- **Signs of the Day of the Lord vs. sudden translation of the saints**

To insert the rapture into the seventh trumpet is to:

- Confuse Israel with the Church.
- Reverse the order of events.
- Turn comfort into calamity.
- Reduce imminency to impossibility.

Paul’s rapture trumpet is **unique, personal, and grace-driven**.

Final Thoughts

The seventh trumpet in Revelation is real—and terrible.

It heralds judgment, destruction, and wrath.

But the trumpet Paul described—the “last trump,” the “trump of God”—is a different sound.

It is:

- A wedding call, not a war cry.
- A shout of love, not a blast of terror.
- A signal for reunion, not ruin.
- A gift for the Bride, not a judgment for the earth.

To confuse the two is to mar the gospel of grace with the fires of wrath.

Let us then stand with Paul—not confused, but confident.

Not tossed, but tethered.

Not waiting for doom, but watching for **deliverance**.

“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump... we shall be changed.”

That trumpet is not in Revelation 11.

It is before the Day of the Lord.

It is before wrath.

It is the voice of the Bridegroom.

And **when it sounds**, the Church will rise.

Conclusion: When the Trumpet Sounds – A Final Word to the Watching Church

We have walked through the pages of Scripture together.

Verse by verse. Trumpet by trumpet. Promise by promise.

From the comforting words of 1 Thessalonians to the final blast of doctrinal clarity in Paul’s epistles, one thing has become undeniably clear: **the rapture is real**, and it is **near**.

It is not myth. It is not metaphor.

It is not wishful thinking.

It is **the blessed hope** of a blood-bought Church waiting for her Bridegroom.

This series has not only reminded us of the glorious event ahead—but it has called us to **live accordingly**. Because when the trumpet sounds:

- There will be **no time to prepare**—only to be found prepared.

- There will be **no time to make things right**—only to rise with a heart that was already right.
- There will be **no second chance to believe**—only the reward of faith or the consequence of delay.

This trumpet is not just calling us up—it is calling us **out**:

- Out of slumber
- Out of compromise
- Out of fear
- Out of this present evil world

We are not looking for the Antichrist. We are looking for **Jesus Christ**.

We are not storing up wrath. We are storing up reward.

We are not cowering—we are **comforting one another with these words**.

For every weary heart, for every grieving soul, for every saint wondering how much longer—we say with one voice:

“Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

The final trumpet will sound.

The sleeping saints will rise.

The living will be changed.

The Church will be gathered.

And **we shall ever be with the Lord**.

So until then—stay watching. Stay ready. Stay faithful.

Preach the Word. Love the saints. Expose the darkness.

And when that final heavenly note pierces the sky...

Let the world say, “What is this?”

Let us say, “He’s here.”

And let the heavens rejoice, for the Bride is coming home.

When the trumpet sounds, the waiting will end—but the glory will just begin.