

Steve Greenberg's Handout: December 17, 2025 (Wed p.m.)
Define the Rapture and its importance & comfort for believers

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1Th 4:13 But I (Paul) do not want you to be ignorant (**uninformed**), brethren (**brothers and sisters in Christ**), concerning those who have fallen asleep (**died in Christ**), lest you sorrow (**grief not for them**) as others (**other people**) who have no hope (**no afterlife, nothing good beyond this present life**).

Teachers note that the very subjects Paul warned believers not to be ignorant of are often neglected or misunderstood. Ignorance in these areas is often described as dangerous, any many get trapped in false religious systems or very little growth.

Praise God, we have future and a hope. There is great comfort knowing that we will see our loved ones who have died. My Mother, Father, brother, Lisa's father, who have accepted Jesus as Lord and have their names written in the book of life. We still are sad that they are not with us, but we are not ignorant because of God's word, we will see them in Heaven.

I have done many funerals and memorials, it is so sad when as far as I know they have not come to know the Lord personally.

Absent from the body present with the Lord, His Assurance of the Resurrection,

2Cor 5:1-8 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2Cor 5:2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven,

2Cor 5:3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked.

2Cor 5:4 For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.

2Cor 5:5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee (**until the fulfillment of the promise**).

2Cor 5:6 So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.

2Cor 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.

2Cor 5:8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

At my dad's grave site, I share with everyone especially from my father's side who are Jewish and unsaved, Absent from the body, present with the Lord, Dads not here he is in Heaven. They were surprised and I got to share the gospel.

1Th 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so **(in the exact same manner)** God will bring with Him, those **(believers)** who sleep in Jesus **(those who died or aka fallen asleep, in this same way, Jesus will rise them from the dead also).**

This Rapture is based on the reality of the death and resurrection of Christ

Jhn 19:38-42 After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus.

Jhn 19:39 And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds.

Jhn 19:40 Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.

Jhn 19:41 Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.

Jhn 19:42 So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby.

Jhn 20:1-9 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.

Jhn 20:2 Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."

Jhn 20:3 Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb.

Jhn 20:4 So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first.

Jhn 20:5 And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in.

Jhn 20:6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there,

Jhn 20:7 and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself.

Jhn 20:8 Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed.

Jhn 20:9 For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

How are they going to be Raptured? Same manner as the Lord was resurrected?

Phl 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

Phl 3:21 who will transform **(change)** our lowly body **(earthly body which is corroding)** that it may be conformed to **(or fashioned like)** His glorious body **(resurrected body)**, according to the working by which He **(Jesus Christ)** is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

We know that when Jesus is revealed, we shall be like Him

1John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

The body is sown in corruption, and is raised in incorruption

1Cor 15:40-50 There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

1Cor 15:42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.

1Cor 15:44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

1Cor 15:45 And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

1Cor 15:46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.

1Cor 15:47 The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven.

1Cor 15:48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly.

1Cor 15:49 And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.

1Cor 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.

Do not lose heart, even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day by the Lord

2Cor 4:16-18 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

2Cor 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

2Cor 4:18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Col 3:10 put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

Rom 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

2Pet 3:18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

1Th 4:15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord (Divine Authority revelation from Jesus, Himself), that we (**Paul includes himself**) who are alive and remain, until the coming of the Lord (**when the Lord returns**) will by no means precede (**into His presence**) those (**believers**) who are asleep (**died, fallen asleep in Christ**).

We: Paul by using the pronoun "we" (e.g., "we who are alive"), Paul lived and taught as if this revelation could be fulfilled at any moment—a concept known as imminency. The Rapture is a signless, timeless event that is always imminent. Jesus can come at any time. Each generation of Christians has justification to expect the Lord to come in their generation just as Paul did.

word of the Lord

Paul wrote this letter (epistle) early: between A.D. 49 and 52)

...The Old Testament had no direct teachings about the rapture of the church and being caught up in the clouds and forever be with the Lord. OT covered many topics coming of the Messiah, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Divine Authority: This phrase acts as a guarantee that the Rapture is not Paul's personal theory but an authoritative promise from God, intended to transform the way believers handle grief

Rapture teaching is consistent with progressive revelation and the early church.

Dan 12:4 "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."

Dan 12:9 And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

Paul was taught by Jesus Christ.

Gal 1:11 But I(**Paul**) make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.

Gal 1:12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Another passage where Jesus spoke directly to Paul

Act 9:5 (**Luke wrote inspired by the HS**) And he(**Saul, aka Paul**) said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "**I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.**"

This is also on the subject of the rapture of the church, also written by Paul empowered by the HS

1Cor 15:51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep (**die, some will be alive**), but we shall all be changed--

1Cor 15:52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed (**every believer who died and is alive**).

Mystery: something which was not known in the past, but is now being revealed by God. Some people think the Mystery is the dead will be raise? But notice 1Th 4:15 at that time, we shall all be changed dead & alive.

Mystery: Mystery of Christ was given and revealed by the Spirit to Paul, His holy apostles and prophets

Eph 3:1-7 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles--

Eph 3:2 if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you,

Eph 3:3 how that by revelation He(**Jesus Christ**) made known to me(**Paul**) the mystery (as I have briefly written already,

Eph 3:4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ),

Eph 3:5 which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets:

Eph 3:6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body (the body of Christ, the Church, a union Jew & Gentile that was not clearly revealed in the Old Testament), and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,

Eph 3:7 of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.

1Th 4:16 For the Lord Himself (Jesus personally, and no other) will descend (come down) from heaven with a shout (**Jesus issues a commanding call for His people to rise**), with the voice (**announcement**) of an (**or the**) archangel, and with the trumpet of God (**trumpet blast**). And the dead (**Christians who have died will rise first from their graves and wherever they are**).

Jesus does not send an angel, but comes Himself.

Michael is the only named archangel biblically (Dan 10:13; Jude 9). There may or may not be other archangels?

The Lord Himself will descend from Heaven:

In English you could say: Entrance of the Son of God, you could say the Lord himself and no other. Greek grammar, Emphasis is on Personal Action: It underscores that the Lord will descend personally, rather than sending a messenger or a proxy. The dominant grammatical and theological consensus is that Jesus personally descends as the unique Savior to gather His church.

Tit 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ (great God and Savior, Christ Jesus).

Believers are encouraged to live in expectant anticipation of Christ's appearing.

Scriptures confirming Jesus is God

Isa 9:6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Jhn 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Jhn 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Rom 9:5 of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.

1Tim 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.

Heb 1:8 But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.

1John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

Thomas answered and said to Him(Jesus), "My Lord and my God!"

Jhn 20:26-29 And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!**"**

Jhn 20:27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.**"**

Jhn 20:28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

Jhn 20:29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me(Jesus), you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.**"**

A shout: By divine authority, a command: death be raised

Jhn 5:24 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.****

Jhn 5:25 "Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.****

Jhn 5:26 "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself,****

Jhn 5:27 "and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.****

Jhn 5:28 "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice

Jhn 5:29 "and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

The trumpet of God

The sound of the trumpet is directly linked to the resurrection of the dead and those alive in Christ".

1Cor 15:52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

1Th 4:17 Then "we" (Paul includes himself, could happen any time, not necessary soon) who are alive and remain (left on the earth) shall be caught up together (raptured, from the Latin translation) with them (alive & dead meet together, at the same time & same place even though the dead rise first, only believers) in the clouds (of heavenly glory) to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall "always" be with the Lord (a great union of those dead & alive).

We: Paul could have said they, he could have said you, instead he said we.

Paul expected the Lord to come in His life time, while he was alive. We are still expecting the Lord to come at any time.

Doctrine of immanency. He could come at any time, no signs needed.

Caught up:

Jhn 6:15 Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.

Act 8:39-40 Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus (different city). And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.

Rev 12:5 She bore a male Child (Messiah) who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child (Messiah) was caught up to God and His throne (Just like the church being caught up to meet the Lord in the air)

1Cor 15:52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Clouds (of heaven, glory)

Dan 7:13-14 "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He (Son of Man) came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him (Son of Man) near before Him (God).

Dan 7:14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.

Warning for those who heard the gospel and did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved.

2Th 2:9-12 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,

2Th 2:10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

2Th 2:11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,

2Th 2:12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Paul saw the amazing hope and future we have in the Lord

Phl 1:21-26 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Phl 1:22 But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell.

Phl 1:23 For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.

Phl 1:24 Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.

Phl 1:25 And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith,

Phl 1:26 that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.

1Th 4:18 Therefore comfort (encourage) one another with these words (this is a great hope and blessing, our reunion with believers who have died).

Jhn 14:1-4 "Let not your heart be troubled (worried, afraid); you believe in God, believe also in Me (be confident, trust, rely on, have faith in Jesus Christ).

Jhn 14:2 "In My Father's house are many mansions (literally dwellings places, rooms); if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

Jhn 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

Jhn 14:4 "And (to the place) where I go you know, and the way you know."

My Father's house" is widely interpreted as heaven, the dwelling of God.

God did not appoint us to wrath

1Th 5:9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

1Th 5:10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

1Th 5:11 Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

Rev 3:10 "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth (**interpreted as the seven-year Tribulation, Daniel's 70th week**).

Rev 3:11 "Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

Exemption from the "Hour": Proponents, including David Hocking, emphasize that Jesus does not just promise protection during the trial, but preservation from the very "hour" (time period) of the trial itself. This implies a physical removal (Rapture) before that time period begins.

The Greek Preposition Ek: Scholars note the use of the Greek word ek, meaning "out of" or "from," rather than en ("in") or dia ("through"). This linguistic choice supports the idea of being kept out of the tribulation's presence rather than being protected while remaining inside it.

Notes:

As of 2025, Dr. Andy Woods is the Senior Pastor of Sugar Land Bible Church in Sugar Land, Texas. He has conducted an extensive series on this topic titled the Rapture Sermon Series (74 approximate one hour teachings).

Extra Scriptures:

We know in part and we prophesy in part

1Cor 13:9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part.

1Cor 13:12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

1Cor 13:13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.