

2019



*A living faith:*

**FOR NOW ...**

**AND THEN**

**CAN WE STILL BELIEVE IN  
THE RAPTURE?**

**GEOFF SMITH**



### 1. The Reality: Different Perspectives

#### (a) Post Tribulation Rapture

The Church goes through the 7 year tribulation period (Rev 6-18)

Believers protected through the tribulation period

Resurrection/rapture of all believers occurs after the tribulation (Rev 20:4-6)

Proponents: George Ladd, Robert H Gundry,

#### (b) Mid Tribulation Rapture

The Church goes through the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation (Rev 6-11)

Believers kept from the last half (wrath period) of the tribulation Resurrection/rapture of all believers (represented by the resurrection and rapture of the two witnesses of Rev.11) midway through the tribulation (Rev 11-18)

The Last trumpet (1 Thess 4:16-17; 1 Cor 15:52) is the seventh trumpet of judgment (Rev 11:15-19)

Proponents: Gleason Archer; Merrill C Tenney

#### (c) Partial Rapture

Faithful believers will be raptured before the tribulation period; unfaithful (carnal) believers will go through the 7 year tribulation period (Matthew 25:1-13).

Proponents: G.H. Lang, Witness Lee.

#### (d) Prewrath Rapture

The Church goes through most of the tribulation but is delivered before the end of the tribulation period – prior to the time of the great wrath of God that will fall on the world (the seventh seal of Rev 6:12-8:1). So the Church is raptured between the sixth and seventh seal judgments.

Proponents: Marvin Rosenthal, Robert Van Kampen, Jacob Prasch

#### (e) Pre-tribulation Rapture.

The Church does not go through the 7 year tribulation period.

The rapture keeps the church from the tribulation. (1 Thess 1:10; Rev 3:10)

The Church returns with Christ at the second coming to reign in His kingdom over the earth (Rev 5: Rev 19: )

## 2. The Reason: Different Processes

If there is one sacred text and one Holy Spirit, how do we account for the differences? What makes us believe what we believe?

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### 3. Our Response: Decision Required

Understand our position carefully

Hold our position lovingly

Articulate our position clearly

Defend our position cogently

Review our position regularly

Adjust our position as necessary

## Section 2: Rapture Passages

### 1. John 14:1-3: The Promised Destination

Jesus Instructs 1. *“Do not let your hearts be troubled”* is a

command, not a suggestion, similar to “Do not covet...” etc. He is offering comfort & consolation – different to Matt 24:15-22 “Flee persecution...”

2. *“Trust in God”* (imperative), or, “You trust in God” (indicative) - either way, Christ calls the disciples to put the faith they have in Yahweh in him – this is nothing less than a claim to deity. Christ could be trusted as God because he is God.

Jesus Declares 1. *"In my Father's house..."* The dwelling place of God in heaven. In Jn 2:16 Christ refers to the temple as his Father's House, but here he is referring to heaven. Jesus told Peter "Where I am going you cannot follow me now..." – had Jesus been going to the temple Peter could have easily followed. See John 14:6-7. He was going to the Father's house to sit at the Father's side (cf Psalm 110:1; Rev 3:10; Acts 2:33-35) where he would remain until the Father gave him the kingdom (Dan 7:14).  
2. *"...are many rooms..."*. Not "will be" – the rooms already exist & always have. Jesus is not on a building project! He is the Word who spoke and with a word created the whole world! (John 1:1-3).

Jesus Explains 1. "I am going..." The "going" refers to Christ's departure through death and resurrection.  
2. "...to prepare a place for you." It is his departure (by way of the cross) that secures the already existing rooms for every believer. G.H. Lang: "The dwellings existed but were not ready for the believers to occupy: presumably Satan's hosts were occupying them – hence Hebrews 9:23, the heavenly things needed purifying & once done, it is a fit home for believers."

Jesus Promises 1. "...I will come back..." This has been understood several ways:

- (a) The Resurrection
- (b) The Holy Spirit
- (c) When the believer dies
- (d) The Second Coming

John 14:1-3

1 Thess 4:13-18

## 2. 1 Thess. 4:13-18: The Promised Resurrection

Four things about the resurrection:

a. An important doctrine (4:13) “Brothers we do not want you to be ignorant...”

1. Paul’s 3 sabbaths in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-3)

2. The Lord’s return is mentioned in every chapter

1:9-10

2:13

3:19

4:13-18

5:1-11

b. A Certain Hope (4:14) "...and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him."

(4:15) "According to the Lord's own word...we who are still alive...will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep"

c. An Orderly Event

1. The Lord Comes (4:16) "The Lord himself will come down from heaven"

2. The Dead Rise (4:16) "...and the dead in Christ will rise first."

3. The Living Caught up (4:17) "After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds..."

4. To Meet the Lord (4:17) "...to meet the Lord in the air."

d. A Relevant Topic (4:18) "Therefore encourage one another with these words."



### 3. 1 Thess. 5:1-11: The Promised Evacuation

1 Thess. 1:9-10

The Thessalonian's PAST: "They tell us how you turned to God from idols..."

The Thessalonian's PRESENT: "...to serve the living and true God and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead..."

The Thessalonians FUTURE: "Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath"

#### a. What the Thessalonians ALREADY KNEW (5:1-3)

1. "Times & the Seasons"

2. "Day of the Lord"

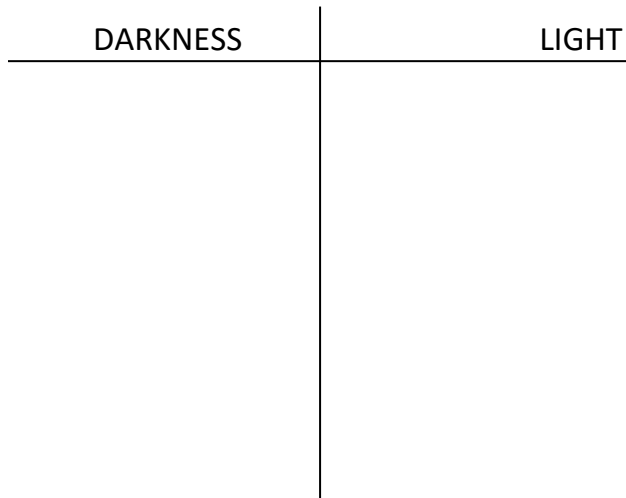
It would be certain - "will come"

It would be sudden - "come on them suddenly"

It would be terrifying - "destruction"

It would be inescapable - "and they will not escape"

b. Where The Thessalonians REALLY STOOD (5:4-5)



c. How the Thessalonians MUST RESPOND (5:6-11)

1. The Need: “be alert and self controlled” (5:6,8)
2. The Key: “faith and love as a breastplate” (5:8)

“the hope of salvation as a helmet” (5:8)

“For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath” (5:9)  
In context the wrath is NOT eternal destruction (2 Thess 1:9 (which stands opposite eternal life), but the wrath here is the sudden “destruction” of 5:3. It is from this wrath that Jesus delivers us (1:9-10), alert or not (5:10), by catching us up & removing us to the Father’s House (1 Thess 4:17).

3. The necessary word: “therefore encourage one another and build one another up....” (5:11)