

**A 3-D Approach to What We Believe:  
 Doctrine, Discernment, & Discipline  
 Perspectives, Priorities, & Prophecy:  
 When We All Get To Heaven!**

—1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11 (& other supporting scripture)

### *Christ's Return*

*We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.*

—from ACEFC's Statement of Faith

—Jesus said, "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."

—John 14:3

—"For many professing Christians, the time when Jesus will return to take us with Him to His Father's house often seems theoretical, far off, and/or quite irrelevant to our daily existence."—Erwin W. Lutzer

—But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, **we will be delivered from the (future) wrath of God through Him.** —Romans 5:8–9

#### The EMPHASIS of Today's Study:

|                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p style="text-align: center;">The ..... God has <b><u>revealed in His Word</u></b><br/>         .....! God wants us to have a ..... &amp;<br/>         ..... understanding of .....!</p> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

—1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

- 13 But **we don't want you to be uninformed (unaware or ignorant)**, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, so that you might not grieve as do the rest of those who have no hope.
- 14 For if we believe (trust) that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.
- 15 For we're **telling you this by the word (authority) of the Lord**, that **we who are alive and remain until the coming (appearance) of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.**
- 16 For **the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a loud command**, with **the voice of the archangel** and with **the trumpet of God**, and the **dead in Christ will rise first.**
- 17 Then **we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and then we will always be with the Lord.**
- 18 **Therefore comfort (encourage, exhort, strengthen, instruct) one another with these words.**

—INTRODUCING THE CONTEXT:

- {1} **GOD'S WORD** is filled with **PROPHETIC PROMISES** intended to provide us with:
  - HOPE
  - COMFORT
  - ENCOURAGEMENT
  - PEACE
  - STRONGER FAITH
- {2} Many people become **OVERWHELMED** when they study/observe **PROPHECY** ... & often that has led to:
  - CONFUSION
  - CONFLICT
  - CONTROVERSY
  - CHAOS
- {3} One of Paul's **CONCERNS** for writing 1 & 2 Thessalonians was to provide some **CLARITY** about **GOD'S PROPHECIC PROMISES!**

—1) An **ANSWER** to the Thessalonians' **CONFUSION** (4:13–18; 5:9–11)

— ..... & .....

— ..... about .....

—God's .....

—2) Based on the Lord's **AUTHORITY** (4:15)

— ..... —**not based on** .....

—3) What happens when Christ **APPEARS** in the clouds? (4:14–17)

—A LOUD **command**

—The VOICE of the **Archangel**

—The TRUMPET of **God**

—The **dead in Christ** will RISE **first**

—**ALL** the **living faithful followers of Christ** will be **CAUGHT UP** to meet the Lord in the **AIR** (sky, clouds)

—1 Corinthians 15:50–54 = from **perishable** to **imperishable**; from **mortal** to **immortal** = an **instantaneous change!**

—Taken to **Heaven as the Bride of Christ**

—**Forever** with the Lord!!!!

—PERSONAL APPLICATIONS & LESSONS FOR US TO LEARN:

—1} Jesus introduced the Rapture in John 14:1–3

—2} The resurrection of Christ sets the stage for the Rapture.

—3} Many people ask about the difference between the Rapture & the Second Coming of Christ

The main distinctions include:

| The RAPTURE                                                                                           | Christ's 2 <sup>nd</sup> COMING                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jesus doesn't return to earth (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17)                                               | Jesus steps onto the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 12 & 14; Revelation 19)                                           |
| Jesus <b>rescues</b> the CHURCH from wrath                                                            | Jesus delivers wrath to unbelievers                                                                               |
| Jesus raises NT saints (dead in Christ) from the grave (1 Corinthians 15:50–54; 1 Thessalonians 4:16) | Jesus puts ungodly people into the grave (Revelation 19:21)                                                       |
| Jesus returns to take the CHURCH to <b>Heaven</b>                                                     | Jesus returns to earth from <b>Heaven</b> with the CHURCH                                                         |
| Following the Rapture, Jesus rewards believers at the Judgment Seat of Christ                         | Following the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Coming, Jesus establishes the Kingdom on earth (2 Samuel 7:8–17; Revelation 20:1–6) |
| The Tribulation follows                                                                               | The Millennium follows                                                                                            |

—4} Our RESPONSE: ..... !! ..... !! ..... , & ..... **ONE ANOTHER!**