

“The Dead in Christ and His Return” (1 Thessalonians 4:13–18)

**Big Idea: Since the risen Jesus will return, grief for departed Christians is overshadowed by resurrection glory.**

- I. Jesus’ death and resurrection secure his people’s resurrection at his coming. (verses 13–14)

- a. We should not grieve a Christian’s death with the world’s despair. (verse 13)

Ephesians 2:11–12; 1 Thessalonians 1:2–3, 9–10; 2:19–20; 3:12–13

- b. Departed Christians will certainly join the risen Jesus at his return. (verse 14)

NASB1995 and LSB: “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him **those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.**”

- II. Jesus’ own word confirms this glorious hope of joining him at his coming. (verses 15–18)

- a. Christians alive at the Lord’s arrival will have no advantage over departed Christians. (verse 15)

2 Peter 3:3–4, 9–14

- b. The very first result of Christ’s public arrival will be the resurrection of his people. (verse 16)

The Shout or Cry of Command (compare Psalm 18:3–17; 68:32–34; Hebrews 12:25–27; John 5:21, 26–29)

The Voice of an Archangel (compare Matthew 13:40–43, 47–50; 16:27; Mark 13:26–27; Jude 9; Daniel 12:1–3)

The Trumpet of God (compare 1 Corinthians 15:50–53; Matthew 24:3, 14, 29–31; Exodus 19:16–20; see also Leviticus 25 and Numbers 10)

Conclusion of Morning Sermon

(Acts 24:14–15; John 5:26–29; Revelation 20:11–15; John 5:21–24; 6:40)

- c. All Christ's people will together be snatched away from this world of death to everlasting life with their Lord. (verse 17)

**"Caught Up" or "Snatched Up"**

"Paul's choice of *harpazo* was intended not to teach 'a secret rapture of the church' but rather to make a possible wordplay, since this term was often used by non-Christian writers to speak of life or the living being 'snatched away' by death... Paul, therefore, may be cleverly inverting a common use of *harpazo* in referring to death: rather than the expected picture of death or fate 'snatching away' to hades those who are living, the living 'will be snatched up' so that they do not face the last enemy, death." – Jeffrey A. D. Weima, *1–2 Thessalonians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, p. 331–332

**"In the Clouds" or "By Means of the Clouds"**

Remember the visible tokens of the Lord's presence in the Old Testament. He led and protected his people and dwelt among them in a pillar of cloud and fire. He descended on Sinai in a cloud of smoke. He descended on the tabernacle and the temple in a cloud of glory. The glory cloud came down on the Mount of Transfiguration when Jesus shone with his divine glory. Jesus will come in a cloud of glory for all the world to see. And just as Jesus was received to heaven in a cloud, so will we be. (See Acts 1:9–11; Revelation 11:10–12; Colossians 3:4; Romans 8:16–23.)

**"To meet the Lord in the air"**

[More literally, "for a reception of the Lord in the air"]

"For as when a king ceremoniously entered a city, certain dignitaries and city rulers, and many others who were confident toward the sovereign, would go out of the city to meet him; but the guilty and the condemned criminals would be guarded within, awaiting the sentence which the king would deliver. In the same way, when the Lord comes, those who are confident toward him will meet him in the midst of the air, but the condemned, who are conscious of having committed many sins, will wait below for their judge." – John Chrysostom

"... and so we will always be with the Lord."

John 14:2–3; Revelation 19:6–9; 21:1–4; 22:3–5

- d. This glorious hope is the best comfort in the face of death. (verse 18)

Isaiah 25:6–9