

This coming Easter, we should not only remember & celebrate that glorious resurrection of the Lord Jesus; God calls Christians to look with longing expectation for their own resurrection.

1. For Christians, heaven is often looked at as the ultimate future destination to look forward to.
2. There is something even greater than paradise in heaven. That is our resurrection.

God wants you to have a resurrection hope.	<b>I. THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE (v13)</b> <b>II. CHRIST'S RETURN (vv16-18)</b>
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### **I. THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE (v13)**

A. Paul opened his teaching on the resurrection with a metaphor about those who **“are asleep.”**

1. This is rather a gentle way of speaking of those who have died. For Christians, “sleep” is used to describe the body's death which is not their final end.
2. Regarding members of “invisible church” (saved by faith in Christ)- WLC 86 - “...their bodies, which even in death continue united to Christ, & rest in their graves as in their beds, till at the last day they be again united to their souls.”

B. **(v13)** is very important **“so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.”**

1. Yes Christians grieve, but you have cause not to grieve as do the rest of world who is without hope.
  - a. look at **(vv14-15)**
  - b. God has not forgotten nor forsaken those who have **“fallen asleep in Jesus.”**
    - 1) Their souls are made perfect & rejoicing in paradise with the Lord even now.
    - 2) He has given them a special privilege to be raised 1<sup>st</sup> — to be united to their glorious resurrected bodies 1<sup>st</sup>.
2. What about those who deny the teaching of the resurrection of the dead?  
→ **1 Cor 15** says they are utterly without hope. Turn to **1 Cor 15:3f**

D. Another essential verse about our resurrection is **Phil 3:20-21**. God wants us to **“eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.”**

1. The same power of God that sustains the planets in orbit & subjects ALL things to Himself, God will use to take our fallen, frail bodies to transform them in strength, power, perfection, & immortality.
3. God will remove our sinful natures & confirm us in righteousness.
4. Getting back to **1 Thes 4**, in **v18** Paul said, **“...comfort one another with these words.”**

## II. CHRIST'S RETURN (vv16-18)

A. Christ will return with a victorious shout— all that hear His voice shall arise

1. Even the grave will not be able to hold them.
2. The voice of the archangel & the sounding trumpet of God will pronounce the King of Universe in all His glory. This will be an awesome, irresistible sight like no one was ever seen before.
  - a. To some, this will be a sight of utmost delight & rejoicing. Faith in Christ will become sight.
  - b. To others, Christ's coming will a sight of dread & woe. It will be the worse day of their lives. → **Rev 6:16-17**, they will say, **"to the mountains & to the rocks, 'Fall on us & hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, & from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, & who is able to stand?'"**

B. A misunderstanding of various Script passages (bad novels & movies)→ confusion about word "rapture"

1. The word "rapture" comes from the Latin of the Greek word in **v17** which is translated here in the NASB as **"caught up together"**  
→ If someone asks you whether you believe in the "rapture" or not, you can repeat today's text.
2. When Christ comes back, all mankind will be resurrected.

- a. All those who died in Christ & the elect remaining on earth will be called up to meet the Lord in the sky – **(v17) "...so we shall always be with the Lord."**
- c. Scripture does not indicate that anyone else will be "left behind" on earth & given a second chance as they suffer a period of tribulation after the return on Christ.
- d. Upon Christ's return, both the believing & unbelieving will be resurrected & stand before God's great white throne of judgment **(Rev 20)**.
- e. This will be the end of the world as we know it— there will be new heavens & new earth with a new Jerusalem descending down from heaven with the Lamb as its light.

C. Concerning much of what is called "the great tribulation" in book of **Rev**, Jesus said would **"soon take place" (1:1) & "the time is near" (1:3)** at very opening of the book.

1. The temple was destroyed & not one stone was left standing upon another (fulfilling **Mat 24:2**).
2. Not all, but most of **Rev** foretells of God's judgment & destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

D. Today's text is not primarily about the judgment of all mankind. Its focus is encouragement by means of the doctrine of the resurrection of you who believe. → **Rom 8:15-19**

Review/ application / conclusion: