

Section Two: The Kingdom of God on Earth (Present)

Category B: Rapture – Kingdom Intelligence Report #4

Topic: The Congregants in the Event

The next question to be answered and issue to be resolved when it comes to the Rapture is less controversial. It pertains to those who will be participants in this blessed event. In the early church, the distress of the Christians in Thessalonica involved those fellow believers and loved ones who had already died in Christ. Would they miss out on the Rapture? Would this event only include Christians who were alive at the coming of the Lord? The answer is provided by Paul, in a manner that not only reassures the Thessalonians, but also removes any doubt for the future generations who would share that concern. The foundational proof text for determining who will participate in the Rapture is found in 1 Thessalonians 4:14-15 –

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.”

The only requirement for participating in the Rapture will be believing “that Jesus died and rose again.” In other words, the Rapture will be the culmination of our salvation. If our salvation is a free gift of God’s grace, received by faith, not earned through works; then why would God insert an additional requirement for the completion of His plan of redemption? He wouldn’t! He hasn’t! None of us ever have been or ever will be “worthy” of our salvation. Therefore, none of us ever have been or ever will be “worthy” of being raptured.

Further confirmation of the above proof text is given by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:22-23, and later in that same chapter in 15:51-52. 1 Corinthians 15:22-23 does not allow for a separation among those who belong to Christ. The first indication is found in the expression in verse 22 – **“so also in Christ all will be made alive.”** Will this transformation take place gradually and in stages, or all at once? Verse 23 gives us the answer – **“those who are Christ’s at His coming.”** These two verses portray the Rapture as an all-inclusive experience. In addition, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 presents the Rapture as a dramatically sudden event:

“Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”

Once again, the Rapture is revealed to be all-inclusive. Its sudden and dramatic nature harmonizes perfectly with the verb “harpazo,” used by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. The word speaks of seizing or snatching an object (or in this case: subjects), in order to take them away by force, with **“all”** being changed (v51b), and none left behind. Ironically, anyone who is concerned with their personal worthiness as a Christian, for the purpose of distinguishing themselves from their fellow believers, will have ample opportunity for proving their worth at the Judgement Seat of Christ, which will be the necessary and heavenly follow-up to the Rapture event.