



I. A physical resurrection is promised for every follower of JESUS CHRIST. This is the blessed hope of every believer that will be culminated in what is commonly called the rapture of the church. This event is a mystery that the LORD revealed to the Apostle Paul and is a major truth of the New Testament.

A. The resurrection is part of our salvation. We have forgiveness, healing, the promise of a blessed life and the promise of eternity with JESUS! Where do we find this promise in the Bible?

1. Jesus first introduced this promise to His disciples at the last supper as He was introducing the New Covenant.
2. "In My Father's house are many dwelling places. If it were not so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, you may be also." —John 14:2-3 MEV
3. The promise of CHRIST coming for His church is revealed in more detail by the Apostle Paul. The Apostle Paul calls this promise the "blessed hope" in Titus 2:13. It is a great source of comfort to all believers!
4. [13] But I would not have you ignorant, brothers, concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others who have no hope. [14] For if we believe that Jesus died and arose again, so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. [15] 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 are asleep. [16] For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. [17] Then **we who are alive and remain shall be caught up\* together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.** And so we shall be forever with the Lord. [18] Therefore comfort one another with these words. —1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

a) \*The word rapture comes from the Latin word "rapiemur" in the Latin Vulgate Bible. Rapiemur is derived from the root verb rapio, which means to snatch, carry off or to seize someone or something quickly and suddenly ([www.latin-dictionary.net](http://www.latin-dictionary.net)).

b) \*The phrase "caught up" is the Greek word harpazo. It carries with it two meanings, one is "to carry off by force", and another means "to rescue from the danger of destruction". (Great Truths to Live By — Kenneth Weust)



5. The Apostle John describes our future resurrection with a new glorified body just like JESUS!

6. And now, little children, remain in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him when He comes... Consider how much love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God. Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now are we children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be. But **we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him**, for we shall see Him as He is. Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. — 1 John 2:28; 1 John 3:1-3 MEV

B. The resurrection of believers in JESUS and the rapture are the same event. CHRIST'S coming for His Church is described throughout the letters of Paul in the New Testament as a...

1. Time of redemption for our physical bodies—Romans 8:23
2. Time of assembly that occurs at the "last trump"—1 Corinthians 15:51-57
3. Time of reward for our service to Christ—2 Corinthians 5:1-10
4. Time of receiving what we have hoped for (resurrection)—Galatians 5:5
5. Time of gathering for the whole family of God in heaven and earth—Ephesians 1:10-14
6. Time of perfection where the flesh is removed—Ephesians 5:27
7. Time of preparation for our return with Christ—Colossians 3:2-4
8. Time of physical transformation (bodies just like Jesus)—Philippians 3:20,21
9. Time of resurrection and translation—1 Thessalonians 4:17
10. Time of departure from the earth—2 Thessalonians 2:3

C. The LORD JESUS CHRIST is also returning to the earth to set up His Kingdom upon the earth. This also is a major theme and promise throughout the Old Testament. It is referred to as the "Day of the LORD". Paul explains the rapture of the church and then puts it in context with the day of the LORD. The day of the Lord is when Christ returns to judge the Nations of the Earth and set up His kingdom of rule for 1000 years.

1. Concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need that I write to you. For you know perfectly that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.



When they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape.—1 Thessalonians 5:1-3 MEV

2. God has revealed His times and seasons in the 7 feasts of Leviticus 23. These feasts represent a prophetic picture of the first and second coming of JESUS CHRIST and the work He would accomplish. The Greek words used for times and seasons are chronos which speaks of a timeline and kairos which speaks of appointments. The day of the Lord is prophesied in the Lord's Feasts.

a) God gave Israel an annual worship calendar to worship Him. When studying these feasts they also reveal the times and seasons of Messiah's visitations to Israel. Paul referred to them as "a shadow of good things to come" in Colossians 2:17.

b) The feasts (Hebrew word *moeds*, meaning appointments) of the Lord, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations (Hebrew word *miqra* meaning rehearsals or assemblies) these are My feasts.—Leviticus 23:2

c) The word feasts in Hebrew is 'moeds' and means appointments. The word convocations in Hebrew is 'miqra' and means rehearsals or assemblies. This shows us that God was using these feasts as appointments for Israel to rehearse what God was going to do prophetically in the Nation of Israel.

3. Three times a year the men of Israel were to appear at the temple in Jerusalem before God at the feast of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. Each feast reveals God's plan and purpose through his Son JESUS CHRIST.

a) The first appointment is Passover, Unleavened Bread, and First Fruits. This illustrates Christ suffering, sacrifice, and resurrection. (Read Isaiah 53:1-6). The Gospels are a fulfillment of this feast!

b) The second appointment is Pentecost. This illustrates Christ sending the promise of the Holy Spirit. Pentecost was the beginning of the annual harvest season for Israel. The book of Acts is a fulfillment of this feast! However, the book of Acts is still being written today! We are currently in the season of Pentecost where God is still pouring out His Spirit and harvest of souls both Jew and Gentile are coming to Christ. This season will be fulfilled when the rapture of the church takes place.

c) The third appointment is Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles. This illustrates CHRIST'S coming in glory and judgment to set up the kingdom of God on the Earth. (Read Matthew 24:29-32). The book of Revelation is a



fulfillment of this feast which is in the near future! CHRIST will come again and fulfill this feast just as He did when He came the first time!

4. All of the Old Testament Prophets declared that the day of the Lord will come and it would be a time of wrath and judgment for the world. Paul declares the same thing, judgment upon this world system is coming! However, believers who have trusted in the work Jesus did on the cross will escape the coming judgment. Remember, Christ took our place and received the judgment for our sins so that we could receive salvation. Paul admonishes us how we are to live in light of the coming the day of the Lord, the second coming of Christ...

a) For they themselves declare how we were received by you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead-Jesus, **who delivered us from the wrath to come.**—1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 MEV

b) For **God has not appointed us to wrath**, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we should live together with Him. So comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, just as you are doing.—1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 MEV

II. The Apostle Paul wrote a second letter to the Thessalonians to clear up confusion about the timing of the rapture. Paul reaffirms that believers shall escape the wrath and judgment which is to come upon the whole world.

A. Paul defines two specific and definite events that precede the day of the Lord.

1. The departure of the LORD'S Church from the earth.
2. The revealing of a world leader called the Anti-christ who will deceive the Nations of the world.

B. The departure of the Church is explained in 2 Thessalonians 2:3. There needs to be clarification regarding this verse. Many modern translations used the word apostasy or rebellion instead of departure. This radically changes the meaning of the text. The apostasy traditionally has been viewed as a departure from the faith. But the context is clearer when interpreted as a "departure" not "departure from the faith". Earlier English translations render apostasia as a departure or departing in 2 Thessalonians 2:3...

1. 1534 Tyndale Bible: Let no ma deceave you by eny meanes for the lorde commeth not excepte ther come a departynge fyrst and that that synfnll man be opened ye sonne of perdicion



2. 1535 Coverdale Bible: Let noman disceau you by eny meanes. For the LORD commeth not, excepte the departynge come first, and that that Man of synne be opened, euen the sonne of perdition,
3. 1540 Cranmar or Great Bible: Let no man deceau you by eny meanes, for the Lorde shall not come excepte ther come a departynge fyrst, and that that synfull man be opened, the sonne of perdition,
4. 1549 Matthews Bible: Let no man deceyue you by any meanes, for the Lord commeth not, except there come a departyng first, and that, that sinful man be opened, the sonne of perdition
5. 1587 Geneva Bible: Let no man deceiue you by any meanes: for that day shall not come, except there come a departing first, and that that man of sinne be disclosed, euen the sonne of perdition.

C. There are some 20th century translations where we also find this clarification in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3. The Wuest's Expanded Translation of the New Testament, the World English Bible and the footnote commentary of the Amplified Translation.

1. Do not begin to allow anyone to lead you astray in anyway, because **that day shall not come except the aforementioned departure [of the church to Heaven] comes first and the man of lawlessness is disclosed** [in his true identity], the son of perdition, he who sets himself in opposition to and exalts himself above everyone and everything that is called a god or that is an object of worship, so that he seats himself in the inner sanctuary of God, proclaiming himself to be deity.—Wuest
2. Let no one deceive or beguile you in any way, for that day will not come except the **apostasy\*** comes first [unless the predicted great falling away of those who have professed to be Christians has come], and the man of lawlessness (sin) is revealed, who is the son of doom (of perdition).—Amplified **\*footnote says, A possible rendering of the Greek, apostasia is departure [of the church].**
3. Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to him, we ask you not to be quickly shaken in your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by letter as from us, saying that the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you in any way. For it will not be, unless **the departure comes first, and the man of sin is revealed**, the son of destruction.—World English Bible

D. The Apostle Paul also speaks of someone who is preventing the appearing of the anti-christ in 2 Thessalonians 2:6. Who does he refer to as the restrainer of the anti-christ? Is it the Holy Spirit or the Church or both?



1. The Wuest translates, “And now you know with a positive assurance that which [namely, the departure of the church, the Saints being a sample together to the Lord] is preventing his being disclosed [as to his true identity] in his strategic, appointed time, for the mystery of the aforementioned lawlessness is now operating. Only He [the Holy Spirit] who is holding [the lawlessness] down, [will do so] until he goes out from the midst [of humanity].
2. The answer to the question above is both. The Holy Spirit indwells the Church and has a restraining influence over the evil one in the world. The Church also has authority over the spirit of anti-christ and is therefore the restrainer—1 John 1:1-4
3. The Church is also God’s dispensers of the Gospel of Grace—Acts 20:2-4; Galatians 1:6-8; 2:3-5
4. The Church is seen in heaven when Christ opens the first seal judgment which is the revealing of anti-christ—Rev. 4 & 5

E. The Apostle Paul admonished the Church “don't be troubled or deceived” concerning the timing of the rapture.

1. Paul makes a clear distinction between the destiny of the world and the destiny of the church in the last days.. The church receives her rest from persecution, the world receives punishment for not obeying the Gospel—2 Thessalonians 1:3-10
2. The world will be under the deception of a time-Christ because of unbelief. The church has been set apart for salvation and obtaining glory because of faith—2 Thessalonians 2:8-13
3. We are encouraged to stand fast and hold onto the traditions received from the Apostle Paul’s ministry. Those traditions are the doctrine of the New Testament. They reveal who we are 'IN CHRIST'

III. What takes place when believers are raptured? All believers will stand before JESUS to give account for their lives at the time of their resurrection. This should motivate us to live for Christ.

A. Live for eternity! Finish strong! Receive your eternal reward.

1. We all must appear at the BEMA (reward seat)!—2 Corinthians 5:8-11
2. Will you receive a reward or suffer loss?—1 Corinthians 3:10-15



3. This is not a time of judgment for sin but an examination and reward for our works. Jesus said, "He who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life." — John 5:24

B. Christian's will receive a crown. To crown (stephanoo) is used of the reward of victory in the olympic games; of the glory and honor bestowed by God upon man in regard to his position in creation; of the glory and honor bestowed upon the Lord Jesus in His exaltation.

1. Spiritual discipline secures The Incorruptible Crown—1 Corinthians 9:24-27 NLT. [24] Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! [25] All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. [26] So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. [27] I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.

2. Faithfulness secures The Crown of Righteousness—2 Timothy 4:7-8 NLT [7] I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. [8] And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his appearing.

3. Enduring temptation secures The Crown of Life—James 1:12 KJVS [12] Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

4. Winning souls (evangelism) secures The Crown of Rejoicing—1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 NLT. [19] After all, what gives us hope and joy, and what will be our proud reward and crown as we stand before our Lord Jesus when he returns? It is you! [20] Yes, you are our pride and joy.

5. Leading God's people (Discipleship) secures The Crown of Glory—1 Peter 5:2-4 NLT Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. [3] Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example. [4] And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor.