

THE RAPTURE

“Escape all these things [taken together] that will take place”...Luke 21:36

Part 3

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16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Isaiah 46:9-10 KJV

9 Remember the former **things** of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,

10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the **things** that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

Isaiah 46:9-10 AMPC

9 [Earnestly] remember the former things, [which I did] of old; for I am God, and there is no one else; I am God, and there is none like Me,

10 Declaring the end and the result from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure and purpose.

The Word or Jesus has always been. It is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). He (the Word) has declared and shown us from the beginning what will happen in the end. No revisions, no changes - He or the Word is the same.

In Chapter 4 of the Apostle Paul's first letter to the church in Thessalonica is where we get the great revelation of how the Lord will return to "catch up" the living saints in the air.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 AMPC

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a loud cry of summons, with the shout of an archangel, and with the blast of the trumpet of God. And those who have departed this life in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we, the living ones who remain [on the earth], shall simultaneously be caught up along (caught up together) with [the resurrected dead] in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so always (through the eternity of the eternities) we shall be with the Lord!

This event is described by a word in our English language and that word is **rapture**. In the Christian church, the word **rapture** creates many different emotions from joy, excitement, disbelief, even anger. You will find people in the Church that will call you a heretic claiming "the Bible doesn't even use the word **rapture**".

In past series I have shown words/phrases in four different passages straight out of the Bible that are used instead of the word **rapture**. These are Bible based words that were translated from the Greek instead of an English theological word to describe the event. Below are those passages in their English translations...

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 KJV

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be **caught up together** with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Key Word: Caught up together

The Meaning: to seize or pluck up by force

The Apostle Paul, after spending three years learning in Mount Sinai from the Lord himself, received the revelation. The first letter he writes is to the church in Thessalonica and every chapter makes reference to the Rapture of the Church.

Ephesians 1:10 KJV

10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might **gather together in one** all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

Key Word: Gather together in one

The meaning: To sum up together in one

2 Thessalonians 2:1 KJV

2 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our **gathering together** unto him,

Key Word: Gathering together

The meaning: A complete collecting of

Hebrews 12:22-24 KJV

22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

23 To the **general assembly** and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Key Word: General assembly

The meaning: To assemble all

Now, we are going to look at these individual verses that specifically deal with the return of Christ for the saints. This could also be called the return of Christ for the saints and the resurrection of the dead in Christ.

Remember, the Apostle Paul is not stating something new but rather giving further revelation to the words that Jesus already had spoken.

Revelation defined:

...a fact this is disclosed or revealed, an uncovering, a bringing to light of that which had been previously wholly hidden or only obscurely seen...to reveal what was before hidden, or present.

John 14:1-3 KJV

1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

*2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. **I go to prepare** a place for you.*

*3 And if I **go and prepare** a place for you, **I will come again**, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

John 5:28-29 AMPC

*28 Do not be surprised and wonder at this, for the time is coming when **all those who are in the tombs shall hear His voice**,*

*29 And they shall come out—**those who have practiced doing good** [will come out] to the resurrection of [new] life, and those who have done evil will be raised for judgment [raised to meet their sentence].*

Notes: _____

The word *good* in verse 29 translated in Greek is: righteous
The word *practiced* in verse 29 translated in Greek is: habitual

John 6:40 AMPC

40 For this is My Father's will and His purpose, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in and cleaves to and trusts in and relies on Him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up [from the dead] at the last day.

So, let's break down these revelations given to the Apostle Paul from the Lord Himself in Mount Sinai.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 KJV

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Key Word: Caught up together

The Meaning: to seize or pluck up by force

The Greek translation: harpazó

Phonetic Spelling: (har-pad'-zo)

Part of Speech: Verb

Definition: to seize, snatch, obtain by force, to take by an open display of force, yank out of danger's way.

Notes: _____

In the modern day Greek language, this idea of *harpazó* could be explained this way: if you had a child that was playing in the street and a car was coming, you pull them by the top of their hair and yank them out of danger/harm's way.

This word *harpazó* means to seize, pluck, snatch by force. To forcibly take something and remove it is the definition of the word *caught up* in 1 Thessalonians. The word *caught up* is not just found there in the Bible, but also in Revelation 12:5 when the man child is *caught up* to the throne, it is the same Greek word, *harpazó*.

Revelation 12:5 KJV

5 And she (Israel) brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

When the Apostle Paul wrote the church in Corinth and said, "I was caught up to the third heaven and saw paradise", that word *caught up* is the same Greek word as well - *harpazó*.

2 Corinthians 12:2 KJV

2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.

The word, *harpazó*, found in several places in the New Testament is in 1 Thessalonians, we are being *caught up* or *raptured* to be with the Lord.

Ephesians 1:10 KJV

10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

Key Word: Gather together in one

The meaning: To sum up together in one

Greek Translation: anakephalaioó

Phonetic Spelling: (an-ak-ef-al-ah'-ee-om-ahee)

Part of Speech: Verb

Definition: to sum up, to summarize, gather up in one place

Notice, the Apostle Paul said ***all things***. He then defined those ***things*** by first stating, those in heaven which are those who died in Christ and are now in paradise.

2 Corinthians 12:4 KJV

*4 How that he was caught up into **paradise**, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.*

Next, the Apostle Paul speaks about those on the earth which are the living saints. This summing up is for those who are dead in body, but alive in paradise and those living here on earth in Christ gathered together in one place or location.

This phrase ***gathered together in one*** means to sum up or gather together in one unit. We are separated now from those who have died in the Lord but, when the Rapture takes place, we are going to be ***summed up together*** in Christ.

This next passage is very important, as it deals with two different returns. I often hear people say that there is only one return of Jesus Christ and it is at the end of the Tribulation...the following passage disproves that.

2 Thessalonians 2:1 KJV

2 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our **gathering together** unto him,

Key Word: Gathering together

The meaning: A complete collecting of

Greek Translation: episunagógé

Phonetic Spelling: (ep-ee-soon-ag-o-gay')

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Definition: a gathering (collecting) together, assembling of the living and the dead all in one location.

There are two different words in this passage which are specifically speaking about two different events or **things** that will take place. The **coming**, is a different word and a separate event than **gathering together**.

The Apostle Paul in speaking of **the coming**, is talking about the actual **coming** down in which the Lord will return from heaven to earth and set up His Kingdom for one thousand years. This is also referred to as the Millennium Reign Of Christ (Rev. 20).

When the Apostle Paul mentions a **gathering together unto him** in 2 Thessalonians 2:1, it is the same event as “**gather together in one**” he mentions in Ephesians 1:10. This is also the same event that the Apostle Paul is speaking of in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 in which he writes, **being caught up together**. These are all the same event, the Rapture, which is the English theological word that describes what is happening in these passages.

So, there is a **coming** of the Lord where He comes down to earth with all the saints and there is a **gathering up** where the Lord **raptures** up all the saints off of the earth to be with Him. The Greek word for **gathering together** in 2 Thessalonians 2:1 and **assembling together** in Hebrews 10:25 is **episunagógé**. This word means: a complete collecting, alluding to the dead and the living coming together.

2 Thessalonians 2:1 KJV

*2 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our **gathering together** unto him*

Hebrews 10:25 KJV

*25 Not forsaking the **assembling of ourselves together**, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

Among the ancient Jews, this event, the **gathering together** was also called the **great assembly**.

Hebrews 12:22-23 KJV

22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

Key Word: General assembly

The meaning: To assemble all

Greek Translation: panéguris

Phonetic Spelling: (pan-ay'-goo-ris)

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Definition: a festival assembly or to assemble all, universal meeting.

In verse 23 of this passage Paul writes, *the spirits of the just men made perfect*, which happens at the resurrection or catching away of the saints when we get into heaven.

1 Corinthians 13:10 KJV

10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

That which is perfect happens at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Greek word for *general assembly* in Hebrews 12:23 is *panéguris* and it means a *universal meeting*. This general assembly is when the saints meet together in the throne room of God at the Heavenly Temple mentioned in Revelation chapters 4, 5 and 7.

In the New Testament, you will find in the English Bible the word *assembly*. The word *assembly* is translated from the Greek word *ekklesia*. *Ekklesia* means *the calling out* and it is a word that is used for the word *church* in the English translation of the Bible.

Matthew 16:18 KJV

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Many times in the Bible, the *church* is translated from *ekklesia* (*a feminine word - bride*) and it means to assemble these people together.

The phrase in the English Bible, *general assembly*, comes from two Greek words. Pan, which means *all* and the Greek word *agora* which means *assembly* or *gathering place*. The word *panéguris* means *to assemble all* or *assemble all together*.

Panéguris or *the general assembly* literally means the assembling of all the people in one location. It means people and not national leaders or dignitaries but an assembly of the common people.

In Greek culture, the reasons for this assembly or general assembly of all people was to: 1) honor a god; 2) attend a public festival; 3) to attend the games.

Why would the Apostle Paul say (in Hebrews 12:22-23) that when the Church is caught up and the dead are raised and the spirits of just men are made perfect, he then calls it *the general assembly of the church of the first born*? Why? Why does he call this a *general assembly*?

First, because we are going to go into the Temple to honor the Lamb in Revelation chapter 4 and 5. Secondly, we are going to be at the Judgment Seat (Bema) of Christ.

Revelation 11:16-19 KJV

16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that **thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints,** and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. 19 And the **temple of God** was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

Thirdly, we are going to heaven for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. This is our festive marriage dinner in Revelation Chapter 19.

Revelation 19:1-10 KJV

1 And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

2 For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

3 And again they said, Alleluia And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

9 And he saith unto me, Write, **Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.** And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

We are going to heaven as the **general assembly of the first born**. This is talking about people whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life in heaven.

The phrase **general assembly** goes back to the time of Nehemiah and Ezra. After the destruction of Solomon's Temple the Jews went into Babylonian captivity. After 70 years when they were released from captivity, they came back to Israel and rebuilt the Temple. The Bible has 2 main books that deal with this - the book of Ezra and the book of Nehemiah.

Then, they formed a group of elders meeting from 410 - 310 B.C. that were brought together by Ezra and they expanded the Jewish Sanhedrin from 70 to 120 members. These men put together the Hebrew Bible which we basically have today. They formalized the prayers that were designed around all the Temple events as well.

The Prophets Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Mordechai, Zerubbabel along with Ezra and Nehemiah, were all part of this **great assembly** which was the name given to the group of 120 members. The **great assembly** was the actual name that was given to this group during this time.

The Israeli government has a **knesset** which is the legislative branch of their government. The **knesset** is derived from the ancient **great assembly** that goes back to the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Notes: _____

At the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, 120 prophets and leaders made up the **great assembly**. Today, the knesset in Israel consists of 120 members as well. (Note:) *The great assembly was also called the great synagogue...*



