

A stylized mountain graphic in a light blue color. The mountain's silhouette is filled with the words 'ENCOURAGEMENT' and 'HOPE' in a bold, blocky, sans-serif font. 'ENCOURAGEMENT' is written across the upper part of the mountain, and 'HOPE' is written across the lower part. The letters are dark blue, creating a strong contrast with the light blue background of the mountain.

# ENCOURAGEMENT HOPE

A study from the books of Thessalonians

Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, to the  
church of the Thessalonians in God  
the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:  
Grace to you and peace.

1 Thessalonians 1:1





We give thanks to God always for all of you,  
making mention of you in our prayers;  
constantly bearing in mind your work of faith  
and labor of love and steadfastness  
[endurance] of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ  
in the presence of our God and Father,  
1 Thessalonians 1:2-3



Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us. 1 Thessalonians 2:8



But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short while—in person, not in spirit—were all the more eager with great desire to see your face. For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and yet Satan hindered us. For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? For you are our glory and joy. 1 Thessalonians 2:17-20



Therefore when we could endure it no longer, we thought it best to be left behind at Athens alone, and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith, so that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this.

1 Thessalonians 3:1-3





But now that Timothy has come to us  
from you, and has brought us good  
news of your faith and love, and that  
you always think kindly of us, longing to  
see us just as we also long to see you,  
1 Thessalonians 3:6





Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more. For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2

\*Sometimes followers of Jesus do not need to LEARN more, they need to OBEY what they have already learned.



For this is the will of God, your sanctification;  
that is, that you abstain from sexual  
immorality [πορνεία *porneia*]; that each of  
you know how to possess his own vessel  
[body] in sanctification and honor,  
1 Thessalonians 4:3-4



and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet [ἡσυχάζω *hesuchazo*... restful, settled] life and attend to your own business and work with your hands [be self-supporting, responsible], just as we commanded you, so that you will behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

Let your foot rarely be in your neighbor's house, or he will become weary of you and hate you. Proverbs 25:17



But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

The prophecy of the Rapture is as sure to be fulfilled as the prophecies of Christ's death and resurrection.

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. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

## 1 Thessalonians 4:15-16

Those “who fall asleep” are Christians who die. The figure of “sleep” for death is common in the New Testament (Mark 5:39; John 11:11). This is not sleep of the soul because Paul wrote elsewhere that a Christian who is absent from his body is present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 1 Thess. 5:10). It is rather the “sleep” of the body in the earth until it is resurrected, changed into a glorious body, and reunited with the soul (1 Cor. 15:35–57; 2 Cor. 5:1–9). – Bible Knowledge Commentary



Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up [ἁρπάζω *harpazo*] up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.  
1 Thessalonians 4:17-18

The Latin Vulgate translates the Greek ἁρπαγησόμεθα as *rapiemur* meaning "we are caught up" or "we are taken away" from the Latin verb *rapio* meaning "to catch up" or "take away."

# What is the Rapture?

- Latin term *rapio*, which means to “snatch away” or “carry off,” is the root of the English word “rapture”
- Greek *harpadzo* ἁρπάζω
- Hebrew *lakakh* לקַח
- English word “rapture” is not found in your Bible
- The rapture event in end times prophecy is God’s taking the followers of Messiah Jesus out of the world instantaneously.
- The main biblical passage for the rapture of the church is 1 Thessalonians 4:15–17. Other texts used to support the doctrine of the rapture are John 14:1–3 and 1 Corinthians 15:51–52.



# Examples of Rapture in the Bible

1. Enoch (Genesis 5, past)
2. Elijah (2 Kings 2, past)
3. Jesus (Acts 1, past)
4. Philip (Acts 8, past)
5. The Church (1 Thessalonians 4, future)
6. The Two Witnesses (Revelation 11, future)

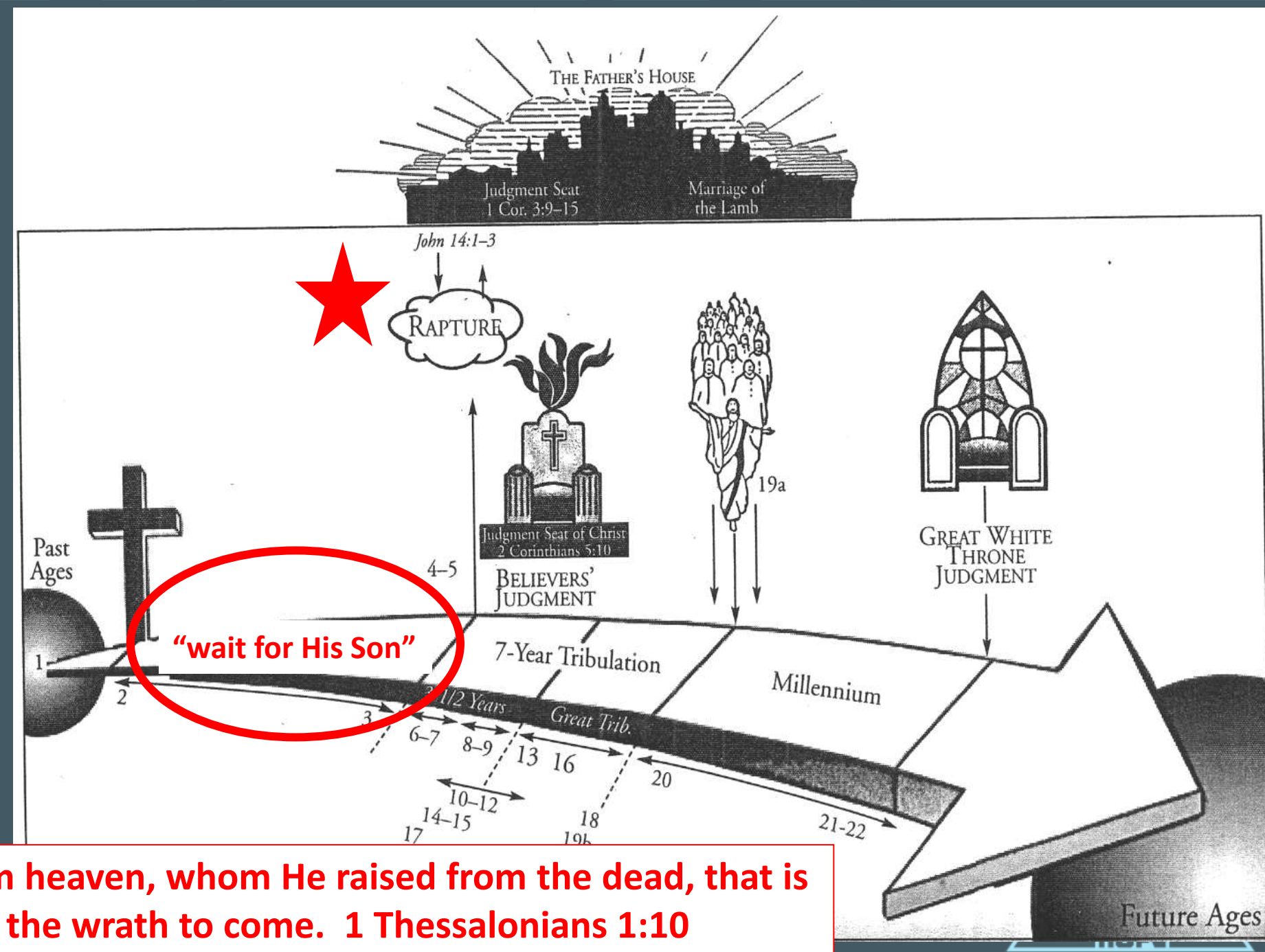
Rapture is **not** a hidden or mysterious concept in the Bible and is **not** limited to the New Testament



We presently live in the **gap between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> weeks (sevens) of Daniel's vision in Daniel 9.**

The 70<sup>th</sup> and final week (7 years) will begin with the Great Tribulation.

The Great Tribulation begins after the Church of Jesus Christ exits the earth at the Rapture.



and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come. 1 Thessalonians 1:10

# So... When is the Rapture going to happen?

- Jesus said, “Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.” Matthew 24:42
- Jesus said, “Therefore, be on the alert—for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning— in case he should come suddenly and find you asleep. What I say to you I say to all, ‘Be on the alert!’” Mark 13:35-37
- The Bible teaches that Jesus can come at any moment. This is called the doctrine of **imminence**.



# 1 Thessalonians chapter 5

1 and 2 Thessalonians, written about 50 AD, are the earliest documents in the New Testament.

[www.jesuswalk.com/books/thessalonians.htm](http://www.jesuswalk.com/books/thessalonians.htm)



Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2

- Paul introduced a new aspect of the subject of the Lord's appearing. His scope of attention broadened from the Rapture to the longer period of history after the Rapture, namely, the day of the Lord. The emphasis is on the unpredictability of the time of the Lord's return.
- The day of the Lord is a future period of time in which God will be at work in world affairs more directly and dramatically than He has been since the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. It is a time referred to by many Old Testament prophets. As the Old Testament verses indicate, the day of the Lord will include both judgment and blessing. That day begins immediately after the Rapture of the church and ends with the conclusion of the Millennium. This day is a major theme of prophecy with its fullest exposition in Revelation 6–19.

- Alas, you who are longing for the day of the Lord, for what purpose will the day of the Lord be to you? It will be darkness and not light; as when a man flees from a lion and a bear meets him, or goes home, leans his hand against the wall and a snake bites him. Will not the day of the Lord be darkness instead of light, even gloom with no brightness in it? Amos 5:18–20
- Be silent before the Lord God! For the day of the Lord is near, for the Lord has prepared a sacrifice, He has consecrated His guests. Zephaniah 1:7



- Before the decree takes effect— the day passes like the chaff— before the burning anger of the Lord comes upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger comes upon you. Seek the Lord, all you humble of the earth who have carried out His ordinances; seek righteousness, seek humility. Perhaps you will be hidden in the day of the Lord's anger. Zephaniah 2:2–3
- “Therefore wait for Me,” declares the Lord, “For the day when I rise up as a witness. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out on them My indignation, all My burning anger; for all the earth will be devoured by the fire of My zeal.” Zephaniah 3:8





- Jesus said, “This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.” John 6:39–40
- so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
1 Corinthians 1:7-8
- For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.  
Philippians 1:6



- when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed. 2 Thessalonians 1:10
- looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! 2 Peter 3:12
- And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, Jude 6



# Jesus said...

- “But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into. You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect.” Luke 12:39-40
- “For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day.” Luke 17:24
- “But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.” Matthew 24:43-44



While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. 1 Thessalonians 5:3

Note that Paul did not include himself and his readers with the group who would see the day of the Lord, as he did when describing the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:15, 17).

– Bible Knowledge Commentary



This day will begin when world conditions appear calm rather than calamitous. This peace will come with the signing of the seven-year covenant, predicted in Daniel 9:27. Those left behind at the Rapture will be expecting peace and safety, but instead destruction will come on them. This “destruction” (*olethros*; 2 Thess. 1:9) is not annihilation, but the breaking up of their peace and security through the outpouring of God’s wrath on earth in the Great Tribulation. Destruction will come suddenly. The illustration of the commencement of labor pains suggests both unpredictable suddenness and great personal discomfort (Matt. 24:8; Mark 13:8). The wrath of God that will have been building up over some time will suddenly break forth. The signs of its coming are discernible, even though the moment of its arrival is unpredictable. No more can the world escape the coming wrath of God, when it breaks out on the day of the Lord, than a pregnant woman can escape labor pains. A strong expression is used in the Greek (a double negative: *ou mē*) to stress that fleeing (*ekphygōsin*) will be futile. - Bible Knowledge Commentary



# Destruction coming suddenly in the midst of apparent peace

- ...Peace, peace to him who is far and to him who is near,” says the Lord, “and I will heal him.” But the wicked are like the tossing sea, for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up refuse and mud. “There is no peace,” says my God, “for the wicked.” Isaiah 57:19–21
- “They have healed the brokenness of My people superficially, saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ but there is no peace.” Jeremiah 6:14
- “They heal the brokenness of the daughter of My people superficially, saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ but there is no peace.” Jeremiah 8:11
- “It is definitely because they have misled My people by saying, ‘Peace!’ when there is no peace. And when anyone builds a wall, behold, they plaster it over with whitewash;” Ezekiel 13:10



But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness;

## 1 Thessalonians 5:4-5

A play on words: the Day of Judgment won't take believers by surprise, since they are not in the dark about it; nor does the brightness of day surprise people who belong to the light (literally, "sons of light"; see Ephesians 5:8).



# so then let us not sleep as bothers do, but let us be alert and sober. 1 Thessalonians 5:6

Christians should not be indifferent to the reality of the Lord's return; they should not be asleep on the job. The word for "asleep" (*katheudōmen*) differs from the one used in 1 Thessalonians 4:13–15 where it means death (*koimaō*). Here it means spiritual lethargy and insensitivity. This is the condition of the unsaved, the others. Christians, on the other hand, should be watchful and soberly waiting for the Lord's return (1 Cor. 1:7; Titus 2:13; Heb. 9:28; 2 Peter 3:12), and self-controlled (1 Thess. 5:6), maintaining self-discipline in view of the great events to come.

For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. 1 Thessalonians 5:7-8

In keeping with the sober attitude just described, Paul used the metaphor of a soldier, one of his favorite illustrations of the Christian (Rom. 13:12b; Eph. 6:10–18; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 2:3–4; 4:7a).

For God has not destined us for wrath [Great Tribulation], but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10

What did Paul mean by whether we are awake or asleep? Did he mean “whether we are alive or dead,” or “whether we are spiritually alert or lethargic”? It seems that he meant the latter because he used the same words for “awake” (*grēgorōmen*) and “asleep” (*katheudōmen*) as he used in verse 6, where they clearly mean spiritually alert and spiritually lethargic. Paul’s point is that Christians are assured of life together with Him, whether they are spiritually watchful or not. That they might live with Christ was His purpose in dying for them. They will escape God’s wrath whether they are watchful or not, a powerful argument for a pre-tribulational Rapture. – Bible Knowledge Commentary



Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

\*This is one of the main callings of Christ-followers

\*This is one of the main purposes of the local church



But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate [respect] those who diligently labor among you [leaders in the congregation], and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly [περισσῶς *perissos*] in love [ἀγάπη *agape*] because of their work. Live in peace with one another. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

Obey [trust] your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you. Hebrews 13:17



We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly,  
encourage the fainthearted, help the weak,  
be patient with everyone.

1 Thessalonians 5:14



All Christians have four ongoing and continuous responsibilities to one another:

- (a) The idle need to be warned. Those who neglect their daily duties need to be stirred up to action.
- (b) The timid (*oligopsychous*, literally “short of soul”) need encouragement. These fainthearted people tend to become discouraged and despondent more easily than most. They need cheering up, stimulation to press on, and extra help to live the Christian life.
- (c) The weak need help. These have not yet learned to lean on the Lord as much as they should for their spiritual needs. Until they do, they need strong support from other believers. Of course all Christians are weak and need the strength that comes from Christian fellowship, but the spiritually weak need it more than most.
- (d) Be patient with everyone.

While other Christians are the primary focus of patience in this context, this charge is general enough to include all people. This ability to help others who are in some respect not as strong as oneself requires nothing short of the love of God produced by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 13:4; Galatians 5:22).



See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.

1 Thessalonians 5:15



Jesus said, “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Matthew 5:38-48



Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:17-21

To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing. 1 Peter 3:8-9



Rejoice always; pray without ceasing  
[continually]; in everything give thanks  
[εὐχαριστέω *eucharisteo*]; for this is God's will  
for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Jesus said, “And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.” Matthew 6:7-8



Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil. 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22

For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted; and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets; for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

1 Corinthians 14:31-33



Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the [Second] coming [παρουσία *parousia*] of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:23

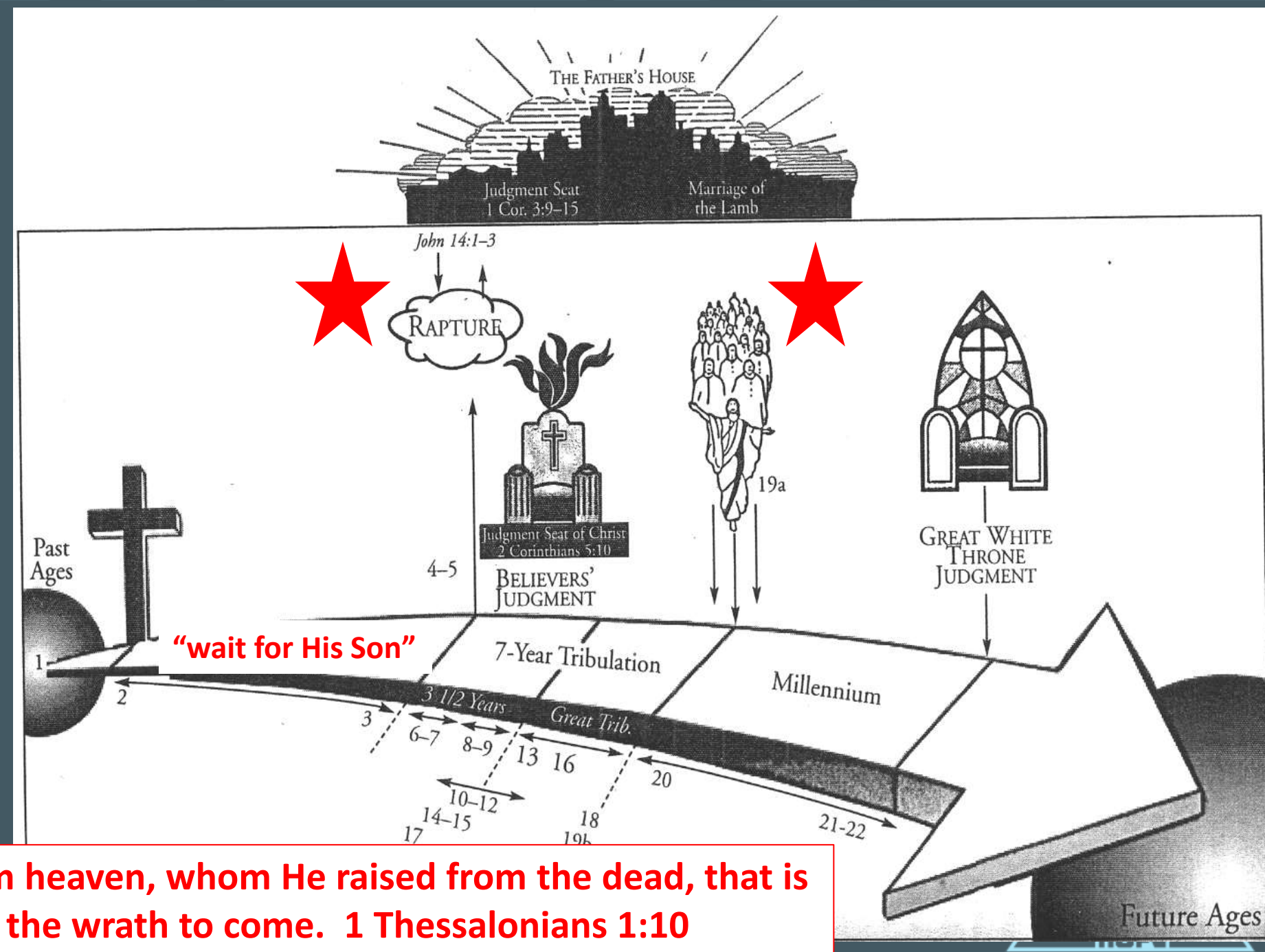
“May the God of shalom make you completely holy.” Compare the last verse of the Kaddish: “May he who makes peace in his high places (*Oseh shalom bimromav*, quoted from Job 33:5) make peace for us and for all Israel; and say: Amen.” The essence of peace is not only the absence of war but holiness, which means living a life centered on and guided by God. - Jewish New Testament Commentary



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and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come. 1 Thessalonians 1:10



Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass. Brethren, pray [keep on praying] for us. 1 Thessalonians 5:24-25

For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1:6





Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.  
I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter  
read [aloud] to all the brethren.

## 1 Thessalonians 5:26-27

Such a kiss communicated personal affection, not romantic love. Paul was encouraging an outward physical expression of true Christian love that was culturally acceptable in his day. The kiss was to be holy, not passionate or fleshly. An acceptable alternative in Western culture today might be an embrace, a pat on the back, or a handshake.

# The letter ends as it began

The grace [χάρις *charis*] of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. 1 Thessalonians 5:28

Grace [χάρις *charis*] to you and peace.  
1 Thessalonians 1:1

\*grace χάρις *charis* - that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness



**END OF THE LETTER**



**Next week...**

# **2 Thessalonians chapter 1**

**\*Second letter written a few months after 1 Thessalonians**

**\*Paul probably had received a second report from the church in Thessalonica**



# Lessons for Us... 1 Thessalonians Chapter 5

- Understand God's prophetic plan
- Be on the alert
- Encourage one another
- Never repay evil for evil
- In everything give thanks
- Abstain from evil
- Keep on praying

