

“THE PROCESS OF THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST”
TITUS 2:11-15; 1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18

INTRO: Anticipating the **SECOND COMING OF CHRIST** is both **EXCITING** and **ESSENTIAL** for the Christian. It is **EXCITING** as it enables us to **look beyond** where we are now to when we will first and foremost see our Lord and Savior **FACE TO FACE**, go into **HIS PRESENCE** where we will be with Him forever, and be **REUNITED** with our friends and loved ones who have died before us. It is **ESSENTIAL** in the sense that it provides **an incentive** for us to be **SPIRITUALLY MATURE AND ACTIVE** as we anticipate the fact that **JESUS COULD COME AT ANY MINUTE** and we do not want to be found lacking in what we should be in **character or ministry** when He returns. Jesus Himself provides the incentive for us to be anticipating His coming as He says in Revelation 22:12, **“BEHOLD I COME QUICKLY: AND MY REWARD IS WITH ME TO GIVE EVERY MAN ACCORDING AS HIS WORK SHALL BE.”** It is significant to know that **THE PROCESS OF THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST** is in two stages: **THE RAPTURE**, when Christ will come in the air to take believers home to be with Him in Heaven, and **THE RETURN**, when He will literally come back to the earth to defeat the Anti-Christ and establish His Kingdom on earth. These two aspects of Christ’s second coming are separated by at least **SEVEN YEARS** called **THE GREAT TRIBULATION PERIOD**. Today we will focus on **THE NEXT GREAT PROPHETIC EVENT TO TAKE PLACE WHICH IS THE RAPTURE**. ***I TRUST AND PRAY THAT WE ARE ALL READY FOR IT THROUGH SALVATION AND SERVICE. IT COULD HAPPEN AT ANY MOMENT.*** Note James 5:7,8.

Titus 2:13 calls the rapture **“THE BLESSED HOPE,”** because it is a blessing to look forward to. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 **describes what will take place at the rapture**. That is the text we will study today.

I. THE COMMUNICATION OF THE TRUTH – VS. 13

“I WOULD NOT HAVE YOU TO BE IGNORANT”

(IGNORANT= “AGN-OEO” – “TO LACK INFORMATION OR INTELLIGENCE”)

A. The Truth About those who are Asleep (Christians who are with the Lord).

NOTE: When Paul uses the word **“ASLEEP,”** he is speaking of the **DEATH OF THE BODY, NOT THE DEATH OF THE SOUL OR SPIRIT, WHICH DO NOT SLEEP OR DIE**. Note Ecclesiastes 12:7. **THUS THE DEATH OF THE BODY IS SPOKEN OF AS BEING ASLEEP.**

1. Note the Similarity between sleep and death

- a. The sleeper and the dead do not cease to exist.
- b. The sleeper and the dead both lie down and then rise up.

NOTE: The word **“ASLEEP”** is the Gk. Word **“KOIMETERION”** which was used for an **“INN”** or **“HOTEL”**, a place to sleep. This suggests that **DEATH** is not permanent.

2. Note that the body does not remain physically dead forever.

B. The Truth About who Sorrows (Believers don’t sorrow over sleep or death).

“AS OTHERS WHICH HAVE NO HOPE.”

II. THE CONFIDENCE OF THE BIBLICAL FACTS – VS. 14

“JESUS DIED AND ROSE AGAIN”

A. We are Confident that Jesus Died and Rose again at His first coming.

-1 Corinthians 15:1-8

B. We are Confident that believers who Died and are now secure in Heaven (2 Corinthians 5:8) and will return with Christ at His second coming.

“WILL GOD BRING WITH HIM.”

(THIS PHRASE SHOWS GOD’S SOVEREIGN INVOLVEMENT IN THE RAPTURE)

III. THE CREDIBILITY OF THE MESSAGE – VS. 15

“BY THE WORD OF THE LORD”

A. It is a Credible fact that some believers will live until Christ Returns

“WE WHICH ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN”

(Paul thought he would be alive at Christ’s Return)

B. It is a Credible fact that those who are alive when Christ returns will not prevent the resurrection of those who have gone to heaven before us.

NOTE: The word **“PREVENT”** means **“PRECEDE.”** Note that the last part of verse 16 says **“THE DEAD IN CHRIST SHALL RISE FIRST.”** God is a God of Order. As some have died before us who are alive, at the rapture those who have died before us, will also rise before us who are alive, then we will go up with them.

IV. THE COMING OF THE LORD – VS. 16

“THE LORD HIMSELF SHALL DESCEND”

(JESUS WILL NOT SEND ANOTHER MESSENGER)

A. “With a Shout” – John 11:42 (Lazarus); Revelation 4:1

B. “With the Voice of the Archangel” (Not necessarily the Archangel personally but with his voice) – Loud, Bright, Clear, With Authority

C. “With the Trump of God” – A Call to Victory – Revelation 1:10

NOTE: The Lord is the source of all of the above which will happen at once.

V. THE CATCHING UP OF THE BELIEVERS – VS. 17

“SHALL BE CAUGHT UP TOGETHER WITH THEM IN THE CLOUDS”

NOTE: The phrase **“CAUGHT UP”** means **“SNATCHED AWAY AND TAKEN UP.”**

NOTE: The word **“RAPTURE”** means **“TO BE SEIZED AND CARRIED OFF.”**

A. The Participants who are **“CAUGHT UP.”**

-All living believers will be caught up after the dead in Christ rise first.

B. The Prospect of being **“CAUGHT UP.”**

“TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR: SO SHALL WE EVER BE WITH THE LORD”

ETERNALLY IN THE LORD’S PRESENCE – NO MORE SEPARATION!

VI. THE COMFORTING OF THE SAINTS – VS. 18

“COMFORT ONE ANOTHER WITH THESE WORDS”

A. The Meaning of the “Comfort” – “To draw near, to instruct, to exhort.”

B. The Manner of the “Comfort” – Continually speaking of the rapture.

LESSON/APPLICATION

Personally focus on and remind each other of the imminence of the RAPTURE.

NOTE JAMES 5:7,8