

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Notes*

**Sermon Notes for December 14-15, 1996**

**"The Coming of Christ for His Church"**

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

The coming of Christ for His church is commonly referred to as the "rapture". This event gets its name from the Latin word "rapere" which is the Latin translation of "caught up" in 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

The timing of the rapture is a matter of debate. But all major positions in one way or another are tied to another future event called the "tribulation".

1. Postributional rapture. (They believe that the church will go through the entire tribulation before being "raptured").
2. Prewatch rapture. (They believe that the church will go through most of the tribulation being raptured just prior to the "Day of the Lord").
3. Midtribulation rapture. (They believe that the church will only go through half of the tribulation before being raptured).
4. Pretribulation rapture. (They believe that the church will be raptured before the tribulation). This is the position of Valley Bible Church.

The Thessalonian Church did not believe in a postributional rapture, a pre-wrath rapture, or midtribulation rapture. If they had they would have anticipated the death of their fellow Christians. The Thessalonian Church, like ourselves, believed in a pretribulation rapture.

Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 is not seeking to change their belief about the rapture but rather to give them more detail concerning those who had died in respect to the rapture.

Why does Paul refer to those Christians who had died as sleeping? They will wake up!

"To sleep" (KOIMETERION) is the Greek word from which we get our English word "cemetery" or in other words "a sleeping place."

When the scriptures speak of individuals sleeping in respect to death it is not speaking of their spirit sleeping but rather to their body sleeping which will one day wake up at the time of their resurrection (2 Corinthians 5:9, Luke 16).

This hope of eventual reunion with those Christians who die allows us not to grieve as the world grieves (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

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### FOUR BASIC FACTS CONCERNING THE RAPTURE

The Pillars

The Participants

The Plan

The Promise