

“Looking for the Blessed Hope”

1 Thessalonians 4:13 – 5:11

Tim Wong

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The Church Age is an absolutely great time to be alive! That's now, the period between Jesus Christ's first coming and the future Rapture. Believers in this time period, who are called Christians, have the Holy Spirit indwelling them, will never be forsaken by God, and will be the first to get their glorified bodies, just to name a few benefits! Another superb blessing is having the full Bible, which teaches us vital truths about the end times of humanity. We study a little bit of that this morning.

The Rapture

1. Is an **important teaching** of Jesus and His Apostles (4:13, 15; 1 Corinthians 15:51)
2. Can happen **at any moment** (4:15, 17; 1 John 2:28; Titus 2:13)
3. Will be **bodily** (4:14, 16; 1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 John 3:2)
4. Comes **before** the seven years of tribulation (5:1, 9)
5. Is for all the **living** and the **dead** of the church (4:16-17)

6. Gives us **hope today** even before it occurs (4:13; 1 John 3:3; Titus 2:13)

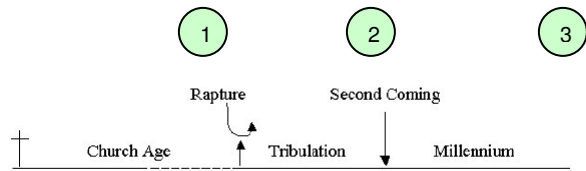
This hope

- a. Motivates us to increase in **purity** (1 John 3:3)
- b. **Calms** our hearts (John 14:1)
- c. Gives **comfort** and **encourages** us (4:18; 5:11)
- d. **Builds** us up (5:11)
- e. Makes us **steady workers** (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Our Response

1. Do you know for sure you are a Christian and will join Jesus at the Rapture? If not, talk to someone who can help you, TODAY!
2. For Christians, I hope you are looking forward to being with Jesus in person and forever. While we wait for the Rapture, our responsibilities are to purify ourselves, to comfort, encourage, and build up one another, and to remain steadfast in laboring for Jesus!

Key Phases of the End Times



1. Rapture of the Church
2. Second Coming of Christ
3. Eternity in the New Heaven and New Earth

Rapture

Like the word "Trinity," the word "Rapture" is not in the Bible, but it is a biblical teaching. It comes from "*rapere*," which is the word in the Latin NT used to translate "caught up" in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. Other English equivalents are "seized with force" or "snatched up." The Rapture is sometimes called the "Great Snatch."

Mystery

The Greek word is "*mysterion*," which means "hidden thing." It is something that can be known only by divine revelation. Since this mystery is revealed in the NT, it was not known in the OT.

Hope

The Greek word is "*elpis*," which is favorable and confident expectation. It is a sure thing in the future, unlike how we sometimes use the word today to mean "wishful thinking."

Day of the Lord

This is a specific period of time beginning (after the Rapture) with the Tribulation and including the events of the Second Coming (and some say, the Millennium, too). It is characterized by God's wrath and judgment against sin.

1 Thessalonians 4:13 – 5:11

13 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. **14** For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep 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 have fallen asleep. **16** 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. **17** Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. **18** Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. **2** For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. **3** 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. **4** But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; **5** for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; **6** so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. **7** For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. **8** 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. **9** For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, **10** who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. **11** Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

1 Corinthians 15:51-58

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, **52** in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. **53** For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. **54** But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. **55** "O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?" **56** The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; **57** but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. **58** Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

John 13:36-14:3

36 Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered, "Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later." **37** Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You." **38** Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times. **1** "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. **2** "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. **3** "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

1 John 2:28 – 3:3

28 Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. **29** If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him. **1** See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. **2** Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. **3** And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.