

Vicarious Sacrifice: The Resurrection of Christ Is Our Guarantee of Resurrection; at the Rapture, the Souls & Human Spirits of the Departed Will Receive Theirs First; There Are No Prophecies in the Church Age Except That of the Rapture; Jesus' Arrival Is Called Parousia, the Church Being Caught Up Is the Rapture; There Are Significant Differences between the Rapture & Second Advent: 5 Distinctions

1 Thessalonians 4:14 - For if [1CC: and it is true that] we believe [πιστεύω (*pisteúō*): transitive; what is believed is that Jesus did die & rise again] that Jesus died and rose [trichotomous separation at physical death followed by unification at resurrection] again, even so God will bring [predictive future active indicative of ἄγω (*ágō*): a prophetic future tense reporting what does occur at the Rapture] with Him those who have fallen asleep [Church Age believers will return with Jesus] in Jesus. (NASB)

- (1) The doctrine of the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection is part of the gospel message.
- (2) It is proof positive that He is the Son of God by becoming the only approved offering that could propitiate the Father.
- (3) It is proof positive that He is the Son of Man since He did die physically, but was resurrected from the dead.
- (4) This is followed by the prophetic future tense of *ágō* which is a guarantee that God will bring all Church Age believers with Christ at the Rapture.
- (5) These are "those who have fallen asleep in Jesus." Their future status is the area of grievous concern by members of the Thessalonian church.
- (6) The faith-rest drill is applicable here but its effectiveness is based on belief in sets of doctrines: **(1)** that Jesus Christ died but rose again: doctrines of His sacrificial spiritual death, propitiation, resurrection, and **(2)** doctrines of those in Paradise being transferred by our Lord to the New Paradise in heaven at His ascension, His promise to return, and the interim body.

- (7) Their doctrinal conclusion rests on confidence that departed saints will not be withheld from the Rapture of the Church.

1 Thessalonians 4:14 - For if we believe, and we do, that Jesus Christ died physical death and three days later was resurrected, then we also believe at the Rapture of the Church God will bring with Jesus those believers that have died during the Church Age. (EXT)

1 Thessalonians 4:15 - 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. (NASB)

- (1) Paul now gives details about the mechanics of the Rapture. Notice in verse 14 that the souls and spirits of those who died during the Church Age, return with Christ.
- (2) Verse 15 informs us that the order of those receiving resurrection bodies is first, “those who have fallen asleep,” and second, “we who are alive and remain.”
- (3) This sequence is communicated to Paul “by the word of the Lord.”
- (4) “The coming of the Lord” makes reference to the Rapture of the Church and one of the references that establishes its imminency is this verse.
- (5) Paul describes those who are “alive and remain” as “we who are.” Paul is teaching the believers at Thessalonica the doctrine of the Rapture.
- (6) These parishioners are concerned that their loved ones who have died will miss the Rapture. Paul informs them that they are the ones that will be resurrected first.
- (7) Then he tells them, “we who are alive and remain” will go up next. This indicates that Paul believed the Rapture was imminent and would occur in his lifetime.

- (8) The word “remain” is the present passive participle of the verb **περιλείπω (perileirō)**: from the Classical Greek **περιλείπομαι (perileipomai)**: “to survive.”
- (9) Paul’s choice of this word drives home the point that this world is designed to kill us, no one gets out of it alive, but with this lone exception: “we who are alive and survive.”
- (10) In 1962, there was a critically acclaimed Broadway play by Anthony Newley named *Stop the World- I Want to Get Off*.
- (11) Well, the world doesn’t stop, but there is a select group that will get off at the Rapture which Paul refers to in this verse as “the coming of the Lord.”
- (12) The only prophecy that is associated with the Church Age is its termination. The Rapture completes the dispensation.
- (13) There are three views about when the Rapture will occur: **(1)** pre-Tribulation, **(2)** mid-Tribulation, and **(3)** post-Tribulation.
- (14) There is no unfulfilled prophecy that must occur before the Rapture may occur, therefore Old Testament prophecies regarding the Tribulation and Second Advent do not include any recognition of a Rapture-type resurrection among them.
- (15) Those subscribing to a post-Tribulation Rapture cite:

Psalm 110:1 - The LORD says to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.

- (16) The assertion is that Jesus cannot return to the atmosphere of the earth prior to the Tribulation because He must remain seated until the Second Advent.
- (17) This is another case of not knowing what time it is. When David wrote the verse that God the Holy Spirit inspired, it was the dispensation of Israel.
- (18) Absolutely no Church Age doctrine was ever revealed in the Tanakh; it was a mystery.

- (19) The “coming of the Lord” is used in the New Testament in passages related to both the Rapture of the Church and the Second Advent. Context dictates which event is in view.
- (20) The word “coming” is the noun **παρουσία (parousía)**: “to come, to arrive, to be present.” It is transliterated into English and given the definition: “Christian Theology; another term for Second Coming” and assigned the pronunciation \pa-roo'-zē-ah\¹.
- (21) This same phrase is used by our Lord in His response to His disciples’ question about when the Second Advent would occur (Matthew 24:3, “What will be the sign of Your coming [parousía]?”).
- (22) In verse 39, He gives examples of its suddenness:

Matthew 24:38 - “For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,

v. 39 - and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be.”

- (23) In our context, the subject is the Rapture. The word *parousía* refers to our meeting Him in the air (v. 17), while at the Second Advent He comes down to the earth (Revelation 19:11).
- (24) There are numerous distinctions between the two events that can be observed from Scripture:

RAPTURE

SECOND ADVENT

Private (Acts 1:11)	Public (Revelation 19:11-16)
In the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17)	On the earth (Zechariah 14:4)
Judgment of believers’ works (2 Corinthians 5:10)	Baptism of Fire (Matthew 25:31-46)
Church goes to heaven (John 14:3)	Church returns with Christ (1 Thessalonians 3:13)

¹ The New Oxford American Dictionary, s.v. “Parousia.”

<p>Holy Spirit is removed (2 Thessalonians 2:6-7)</p>	<p>Satan is removed (Rev. 20:1-3)²</p>
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² R. B. Thieme, Jr., “Doctrines of the Bible: Doctrine of the Second Advent” (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2003), 1.