

## **Introduction:**

When the subject of Christ's return (the second coming) comes up in conversation, there are at least three predictable responses:

- Unhealthy Preoccupation
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Fearless Skepticism
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Fearful Confusion

## **Transition:**

In some ways, times haven't changed much. The Apostle Paul addresses these very three responses in his letter to the Thessalonians.

## How to Give Hope to the Fearful:

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

- **Question:** What happens to a believer when he/she dies?
- **Answer:** The certainty of a believer's resurrection is based on the fact of Christ's resurrection.

*<sup>13</sup>Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.*

*<sup>14</sup>We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.*

- **Question:** What about our "loved ones" (believers) who die before us?
- **Answer:** The Christian dead will rise first and share in the Kingdom.

*<sup>15</sup>According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.*

- **Question:** When and how will these "end times" events occur?
- **Answer:** At the rapture of the Church.

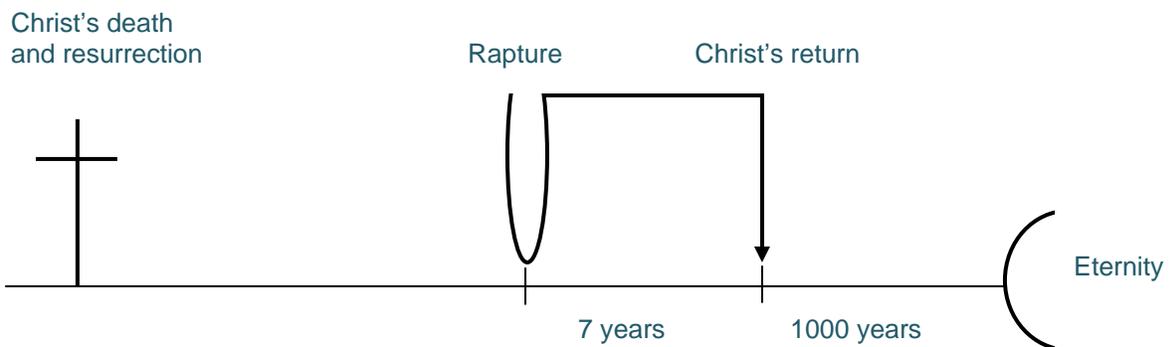
*<sup>16</sup>For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.*

*<sup>17</sup>After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.*

*<sup>18</sup>Therefore encourage each other with these words.*

### 5 Aspects of the Rapture:

- Return of Jesus for His Church 1 Thessalonians 4:16a  
↓
- Resurrection of the dead in Christ 1 Thessalonians 4:16b  
↓
- Rapture of the Church to heaven 1 Thessalonians 4:17a  
↓
- Reunion of believers with Christ and each other 1 Thessalonians 4:17b  
↓
- Reassurance of hope in the face of death 1 Thessalonians 4:18



\*Ryrie, page 14

## How to Give Help to the Fearless:

- **We Must Warn Them** – by speaking the Truth in love.
  - Jesus' return is certain 1 Thessalonians 5:1
  - Jesus' return will be unexpected 1 Thessalonians 5:2
  - Jesus' return will mean judgment 1 Thessalonians 5:3
- **We Must Win Them** – by Living the Truth in Life 1 Thessalonians 5:4-11

## Application / Discussion Questions:

1. Would you characterize your response to Christ's return as:  
a) Fearless and skeptical? b) Fearfully confused? c) Joyfully anticipating?
2. What information in this message was new to you? Most helpful? Still unclear?
3. Are you certain that you are ready for the Lord's return? Why? Why not?
4. Is there someone you need to "warn" and "win" before Christ's return?  
Who? When?

Resource: \* *Come Quickly Lord Jesus – What You Should Know About the Rapture*  
by Dr. Charles Ryrie