

1 THESSALONIANS CHAPTER 4
Lesson 12: When will the Rapture Occur?
1Thessalonians 4:13-18

Feb 26 2024

The term **first resurrection** does not mean there will be a second or third, but is so designated because there is none preceding it. In 1 Corinthians 15 God likens the first resurrection to a harvest. This is because it will have three aspects; the first fruits, the harvest and the gleanings. Each of these produces the same fruit as the others but in varying quantities depending upon the times and seasons. In all three cases there will be a bringing forth from the dead sleeping saints and a catching away of living saints.

I. THE FIRST RESURRECTION: 3 parts

- A. The harvest of saved saints is in three parts (1 Corinthians 15:23-26).
 - 1. Christ and some saints ascend (firstfruits)
 - 2. The church is raptured (“They that are Christ’s”) at his coming.
 - 3. Tribulations saints (“Then cometh the end...”).

II. THE FIRSTFRUITS

- A. At His resurrection Christ appears having not yet ascended (John 20:16-18).
- B. Some saints come out of their graves and walk upon the earth (Matthew 27:50-53).
- C. When Christ ascends He takes with Him the Old Testament saints (Ephesians 4:8-10).
- D. He thus takes both dead and living saints to heaven. This is the Firstfruits of the first resurrection.

III. THE HARVEST (studied in previous lessons)

- A. This is the main in-gathering at the close of the church age (1 Corinthians 15:51-58).
- B. This is the catching away of all those in Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

IV. THE GLEANINGS

- A. At the beginning of the great tribulation God seals 144,000 witnesses that they die not (Revelation 6:9-11; 7:11-15).
- B. These tribulation saints are found in heaven before the great tribulation ends (Rev 14:1-3).
 - a. These are people who are connected with the kingdom of heaven (Jews). The parable of the ten virgins deals with these same people (Matt. 25:1-12).
 - i. The “wise virgins” get caught up to join “the general assembly and church of the firstborn” (Heb. 12:22-23).
- C. There is clearly a catching away of tribulation saints before the second advent (Isaiah 26:16-21, Revelation 6:16-17,
 - a. The rapture at the gleanings takes place during the time of God’s wrath (Rom. 2:5-6).
 - b. The church is not appointed unto wrath (1 Thess. 5:8-11) and is excluded from the Great Tribulation.

TYPES IN THE BIBLE

- 1. **ENOCH** “Enoch walked with God.” God took Enoch out of harm’s way before the watery tribulation of the universal flood. He is clearly a type of the Church.
- 2. **NOAH** Not removed from the earth, but went through the watery tribulation. He is a type of the Tribulation Saint.
- 3. **LOT** Protected from God’s wrath upon Sodom, but he wasn’t removed from the earth. He represents a Tribulation Saint.

4. **JOSEPH** A type of Jesus Christ, he took a gentile bride during the time he was rejected by his brethren and before his brethren received him as their king. He took his bride to dwell with him before the 7-years of famine on earth.
5. **MOSES** Also a type of Christ. Rejected by his brethren, took a gentile bride before the plagues fell on Egypt and before battling Pharaoh (type of the Antichrist).
6. **ESTHER** type of the church, a chaste virgin, marries a king. After the marriage, the enemy of the Jews was revealed (Haman, type of the Antichrist).

Note: Those members of cults and apostate religious bodies will ensnare the Christian by catching him using non-Biblical terminology. We carefully avoid making reference to the “rapture” when dealing with such persons because the term is not found in the Bible. There are clearly three times when God takes dead and living saints to heaven. These comprise one resurrection called the harvest. The Old Testament saints (firstfruits), the Church (the harvest), the tribulation saints (the gleanings): and these three are one.