

Two Things Paul Says Will Happen Just Before The Rapture

By Robert I. Adams

In this article, we are going to focus on what Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians concerning what will occur just before the rapture takes place. He mentions two things in the latter part of chapter 4. Here is the passage:

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 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 by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

The first thing Paul says will happen just before the catching up of the saints is that Jesus will come - He will descend from heaven to the air. The next thing to happen just before the catching up is that those who died as believers in Christ will rise from the dead.

Both of these events – Jesus coming down from heaven, and the resurrection of the dead in Christ, are described in close proximity to each other in the Book of Revelation. Although the coming of Jesus is referred to several times in the Revelation, the actual description of the coming of Jesus is in chapter 19. Here, we read that Jesus will come down from heaven. Then a few verses later in chapter 20 we read of the resurrection of believers who have died. The formulation of the Greek text indicates that what John witnessed here was the aftermath of the resurrection, thus showing it had just happened - evidently at the coming of Christ from heaven. John writes that this mass resurrection of believers is the first of two mass resurrections (the second happens much later on and concerns everyone who died as unbelievers).

In the Revelation, we see that the coming of Jesus from heaven, and the resurrection of the dead in Christ happen near the end of the book - **after** the end time tribulation that is described in the central part of the book. We note that no previous coming of Christ or mass resurrection is portrayed in the early chapters of the book. With this in mind, we conclude that what Paul wrote concerning the coming of Jesus from heaven and the accompanying resurrection from the dead aligns with what the Book of Revelation shows. This means that when Paul writes that the descent of Jesus from heaven as well as the resurrection of the dead immediately precede the catching up of the saints, then we must conclude that the catching up of the saints will happen **after** the end time tribulation.

An interesting confirmation of this is a reference in Revelation chapter 19 of the bride of Christ being arrayed in clean and bright linen. This happens in close conjunction with the descent of Jesus from heaven described in the same chapter. What is in view here is the bride of Christ putting on her wedding attire at the coming of Christ. This corresponds to putting on – or being clothed with – immortality, as described in 1 Corinthians 15:52 and 53, where we are told of the changing of the bodies of all the believers (whether dead or alive) at the coming of Jesus. All of the resurrected and glorified believers will then be caught up in the air, as Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 4 to meet Jesus who has come down from heaven.

The reason for the great gathering of the saints to meet Jesus in the air is evidently to greet Him and escort Him on the last leg of His journey to earth, more precisely Jerusalem, where Jesus will destroy the Antichrist, and reign with the saints in His kingdom on earth.

In case you have some queries about this, I have compiled answers to the most frequently asked questions about the Bible's teaching on the return of Jesus in my book "The Approaching Apocalypse" (also available in e-book format). You are welcome to look at it at [Amazon](#).

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