

## **Eternity – Heaven – Caught Up to Be With the Lord**

How will we get into heaven is a mystery that God has already solved. He has prepared a place for us and a new body, and when the trump of God sounds we shall be caught up to be with the Lord.

**1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 NKJV** 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.

As Jesus was anticipating His return back to the Father, He said He was going to prepare a place in His Father's house.

**John 14:2 NKJV** In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

There is a place prepared for you. It is good for us to remember that Jesus ascended back to the Father and a cloud received Him out of their sight. Angels told those who watched Christ's ascension, "He will come back in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven," (Acts 1:11). The Lord's return to heaven is a testimony that He has gone to prepare a place for us. Jesus gave a definite promise regarding this.

**John 14:3 NKJV** And 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.

Pay close attention to this marvelous fact: "I will come again and receive you to Myself..." We have this confidence and steadfast hope that if Jesus went back to the Father and prepared a place for us, He is coming again. Our Lord is coming back to catch His waiting bride away.

During the Sermon of the Mount, Jesus spoke about His return and the signs of His coming. He spoke with absolute certainty about the seven years of tribulation, the rise of the Antichrist, and terrible earth shaking events. He gave several signs and warnings that would precede the events of the tribulation. He said there would be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. He warned that lawlessness would abound, and the love of many would grow cold. His words indicated that these things could happen at any time.

**Matthew 24:27 NKJV** For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Jesus said that after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, (Matthew 24:29). At that time, the Lord will **return to earth** with power and great glory and set up His earthly kingdom. The New Jerusalem will descend from

God out of heaven, and Christ will rule and reign on earth. That will be a glorious day when Satan will be bound for a thousand years.

**Matthew 24:35 NKJV** Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

We are most definitely seeing an increase in all of these signs that the end is upon us. If we can see that these things are happening and the Tribulation is near, you need to know the rapture of the church is close at hand.

**Matthew 24:44 NKJV** Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Jesus' warning lets us know that the day and hour of His return will happen with startling suddenness. Listen to His words of warning.

**Matthew 24:36 NKJV** But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

It is important for us to keep this in mind. No one but the Father in heaven knows when the Lord shall call us home, but Jesus gives these warnings.

**Matthew 24:37 NKJV** But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

The Lord tells us what was happening in Noah's days.

**Matthew 24:38-39 NKJV** For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Life continued with casual disregard of the warnings that Noah gave. Noah kept telling his generation that the flood was coming. His warning continued throughout the time he was building the ark. None of his generation believed that the flood would come until it took them all away. Jesus is telling our generation that is how it is going to be when He catches away His own.

**Matthew 24:40-42 NKJV** Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

Our world is filled with signs of Christ's return, and people are talking about all of the troubles, violence, and changes to the earth, and economy. Just like the individuals who are mentioned in this text, people are busy with the cares of this life. The things Jesus said would be happening before the rapture of the Church are taking place all around us.

We need to be ready.

**1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 NKJV** 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.

Being “caught up” is the rapture of the Church.

- In Acts 8:39, as soon as Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away.
- In 2 Corinthians 12:2, 4, Paul was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words.

One of these days, the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead will quicken and give life to these bodies, and the Lord will catch His waiting bride away.

### **Pay attention to the Lord’s involvement in what is about to happen.**

Take note the recurrence of the word “Lord” in these verses:

- the word of the Lord (v. 15) What we are reading is a direct *word from the Lord*.
- the coming of the Lord (v. 15) God is not going to send mighty angels to do this. This will be fulfilled by the coming of the Lord.
- the Lord Himself (v. 16) The Lord will descend Himself. Revelation 1:7 Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him...
- to meet the Lord (v. 17) The purpose of His coming is for the church to meet the Lord. We are going to be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air.
- to always be with the Lord (v. 17) The duration is set. Those who are caught up shall forever be with the Lord.

One of these days without additional warning, Jesus Christ is going to descend from heaven with a shout... All of a sudden, we will be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

**1 Corinthians 15:51-52 NKJV** Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

I have thought about this many times. Jesus Christ could suddenly come any time, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye... Don’t be caught away with the cares of this life.

This catching away into heaven is the hope of the Church. Our hope in Christ reaches beyond this life, (1 Corinthians 15:19). We thank God for every blessing we receive in Christ now. There is coming a day when the blessings of this life will not begin to compare with the joys that await us. We are confident that Jesus could come any time. The Lord Himself will step out of Heaven and give a shout of an archangel, and the trumpet of God will sound. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we are going to be caught up to be with the Lord.