

Introduction: The Lord told the Apostles He was returning, but He didn't quite tell them exactly when. Such teaching caused the early Christians to believe He was returning immediately in their life time.

The believers at the church of Thessalonica expected His return; but they had two problems. First, they weren't sure when 'soon' was going to be and, secondly, believers in their fellowship were dying before the Lord's return.

I. Believers who have died will not miss the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-15)

- We are not sorrowful like those who have no hope.
- Through Paul, the Lord teaches that we are "asleep", not dead. Those who are asleep will wake up; believers in Christ will awaken to glory.
- To be part of this beautiful event, we must believe on Christ. That means we believe we are sinners, believe Jesus died for our sins, and have faith in His finished work at the cross.

II. If you've trusted Christ, you and all will meet the Lord in the air. (1 Thess 4:16-17)

- If Christ returns while we are still alive, God will take both the living and dead in Christ and cause them both to meet Him in the air. The living are not going before the dead, but the dead are going before the living.
- His return will be preceded by the shouting of the voice of an Archangel!
- His return will be preceded by the sounding of a trumpet.

III. The Rapture will be a joyous encounter. (1 Thess 4:18)

- We will be in awe of our glorious Savior's return!
- We will be joyous in our reunion with all of our past believing loved ones.

Conclusion:

How many believers are on earth now and how many have died in Christ in the past? All of these believers will be caught up to be with Jesus, return with Him to earth to rule and reign in the Millennial kingdom, and reign with Him forever.

Are you ready for His return? It goes back to - do you believe and rely on Christ alone for your salvation?