

Recap of last week's message (8/2/20 - 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-57):

1. The key passages in the New Testament concerning the doctrine of the rapture are 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-57. In the First Thessalonians passage, Paul raises the issue because of concerns by the Thessalonians about those believers who had died before Christ's return. What awaited them?
2. "Paul has taught them about the return of Christ, and they have become distressed over the deaths of some among them. Paul comforts them with the assurance that all who die in Christ will be resurrected at His Parousia (presence, coming, advent), see 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18." (Wilkinson and Boa)
3. Paul calls the rapture a "mystery" in 1 Corinthians 15:51. A Biblical mystery is something not previously revealed which is now being revealed. The resurrection wasn't a mystery, it was taught in the Old Testament (see Job 19:25 and Daniel 12:2), whereas the rapture of the church was a previously unknown (see Ephesians 3:1-6 for an example of another Biblical mystery—the church, a body made up of Jews and Gentiles on an equal basis making up one body).
4. While Paul's emphasis in 1 Thessalonians is upon the resurrection of those who have died in Christ, his emphasis in 1 Corinthians is upon those who are alive at His coming. The perishable (those who have died) will be clothed with the imperishable. The mortal (those who are alive at His coming) will be clothed with immortality. According to vs. 51 "all " will be changed, instantaneously, both dead and living believers.
5. Based upon the following references, we believe the Rapture to be pre-tribulational, that the church will not go through any part of the Tribulation but be raptured out before it begins, Revelation 6:16,17; 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 5:9; Revelation 3:10 and 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. The 2 Thessalonians passage teaches that the day of the Lord (the Tribulation) cannot come until the restrainer (the Holy Spirit) is removed which occurs at the rapture of the church.
6. "The point of eschatology [the doctrine of future things] throughout the Bible is to provide encouragement to believers in their witness for Jesus Christ (Mt. 24:14; 1 Cor. 15:58)...The reason God grants us a view of the future is to encourage us to witness for Christ and serve Him in the present." (Nelson's Illustrated Dictionary of the Bible).