

October 5, 1972

THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

In previous messages we have noted the certainty of Biblical prophecy. We have looked at a great Old Testament prediction of the glorious millennial time when Jesus will reign on earth. We have seen the two great emphases that were made at the very end of Jesus' earthly ministry. This morning I shall direct your attention to a passage that is extremely important because of the information that it gives about the first phase of the return of Christ. The passage is 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17:

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

We notice that verse 15 contains the words: "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord." Paul is here stressing the fact that he is not telling us something he has himself observed or thought out. He is not merely giving an insight that has occurred to him, but is setting down what God has specifically revealed.