

Vicarious Sacrifice: 7th Characteristic of Resurrection Body: Raptured Saints Liftoff at Warp Speed, 1 Thess 4:16; Exit Resurrection in Phil 3:11b; Group B Follows Group A; *harpázō* Translated “Raptured” from the Latin: *Raptus*; the Revival of Dispensations following the Reformation; Believers Join Jesus for a Meeting in the Air; Prophetic Future Tenses Reports Back from the Future What Does Occur, 1 Thess 4:17

- (1) The middle voice is deponent, therefore active in meaning. This means that bodies of corruption have been exchanged for resurrection bodies.
- (2) This group of Church-Age believers is simultaneously producing the action of the seventh characteristic of the resurrection body: to move vertically upward and then continue through interstellar space at warp speed.
- (3) The phrase “warp speed” is defined as “a velocity greater than the speed of light, popularized in science fiction and especially by the TV series “Star Trek.”¹
- (4) This is the first of the two-phase execution of the Rapture, characterized by Paul as the “exit resurrection” in:

Philippians 3:11b - ... that I may advance to the point of the resurrection [ἐξανάστασις (*exanástasis*): exit resurrection] away from the spiritually dead ones. (CTL)

- (5) *Exanástasis* is a compound of the proposition ἐξ- (**ex-**):² “exit” and the noun **ανάστασις (*anástasis*)**: “resurrection.”
- (6) Paul looks forward to the Rapture so that he might exit this earth and become separate from unbelievers, the “spiritually dead ones.”
- (7) In verse 16, Paul indicates that those believers who are physically dead at the Rapture will exit first, the adverb **πρῶτον (*próton*)**: “first.”

¹ Robert L. Chapman, ed., *American Slang* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 473, s.v. “warp factor.”

² “Denotes exit out of, as separation from” Joseph Henry Thayer, “ἐκ,” in *The New Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1981), 189.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 - For the Lord Himself will descend from the third heaven with a loud command for the archangel, Seraph Gabriel, to give the order for God's bugler to sound reveille, and those who are physically dead will be resurrected first. (EXT)

1 Thessalonians 4:17 - Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. (NASB)

- (1) The verse begins with the temporal adverb **ἔπειτα** (*épeita*): "then." This introduces the second phase of the Rapture.
- (2) Verse 16 ended with the adverb *prōton* indicating the first group's exit has been completed. The very next word in the text is *épeita*: "then."
- (3) The second group is described in an interesting way: "we who are alive and remain." The pronoun "we" is the first person plural of **ἐγώ** (*egō*): Paul includes himself and his audience in the second group.
- (4) This is yet another verse that teaches the imminency of the Rapture. Paul indicates they will be alive but remain on the earth.
- (5) Next is the future passive indicative of the verb **ἁρπάζω** (*harpázō*): "to snatch or take away."³
- (6) The future tense is predictive/prophetic; Paul, under the mentorship of the Holy Spirit, is enabled to look forward into the divine decree and report back what does occur.
- (7) The passive voice indicates that these believers will receive the action of the verb by being caught up to join Group A and the Lord.
- (8) The indicative mood is declarative indicating that this is a confirmed fact of future history.

³ "To grab or seize suddenly in such a way that no resistance is offered" (Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, "ἁρπάζω," in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed., rev. Frederick W. Danker [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000], 134, s.v. 2.b.

- (9) This event is commonly referred to as the Rapture and is to be distinguished from the Parousia of the Lord. The former is our meeting Him in the air while the latter is His arrival there from the third heaven.
- (10) Some may ask why the word *harpázō* is referred to by the word “Rapture.” This word is the anglicized form of the Latin *raptus* which means, “to carry off.”
- (11) *Raptus* emerges from the Latin Vulgate:

Latin succeeded Greek as the official language of the Western Church during the third century. Ecclesiastical Latin originated in the popular speech and was popularized and formalized by the Vulgate of Jerome [c. 347–420]. It served as the *lingua franca* until late in the Middle Ages.⁴
- (12) The term “imminency” was used broadly by apostolic fathers such as Clement of Rome and Ignatius of Antioch and by Ephraem Syrus the Syrian’s fifth-century, “Sermon on the Last Times, the Antichrist, and the End of the World.”
- (13) The amillennialism of Origen and Augustine became the established doctrine of both the Eastern and Western churches in the fifth century.
- (14) It was during the Reformation and following that theologians returned to literal-grammatical-historical hermeneutics and in doing so reestablished dispensationalism and the doctrine that there is a difference between the Rapture and the Second Advent of Christ.
- (15) In this revival, it became clear that there was a two-phase event where the dead in Christ would be raptured first followed by those that were still alive.⁵

⁴ Donald M. Lake, “Latin, Ecclesiastical,” in *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, rev. ed., gen. ed. J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids; Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), 582.

⁵ Points 12–15 are summarized from: Thomas D. Ice, “Rapture, History of the,” in *Dictionary of Premillennial Theology: A Practical Guide to the People, Viewpoints, and History of Prophetic Studies*, gen. ed. Mal Couch (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1996), 345–47.

- (16) This latter group are said to be “caught up,” and the Greek term used here is *harpázō* which in the Latin is *raptus* or Rapture.
- (17) This second shift will ascend upward into clouds to meet with the first shift. The word “meet” is not a verb but the noun **ἀπάντησις (*apántēsis*)** and refers to a “meeting”: the second shift and the first shift join with the Lord for a meeting “in the clouds” which are located “in the air.”
- (18) The word “air” is the Greek noun **ἀήρ (*aēr*)**: the atmosphere surrounding the earth: the first heaven.
- (19) If this doesn’t give you great hope for tomorrow, then maybe the final clause will: “we shall always be with the Lord.”
- (20) The word “always” is the temporal adverb **πάντοτε (*pántate*)**: “always, for all time, ever.” The verb is the future active indicative of **εἶμι (*eimi*)**: “shall be.”
- (21) The future tense is predictive/prophetic indicating that beginning with this assembly the universal church shall always be with the Lord.
- (22) The indicative mood confirms that Paul has looked forward into the divine decree and is reporting back that this meeting does occur and will continue forever.

1 Thessalonians 4:17 - Then we [those believers physically alive at the Rapture] who are alive and remain [following the ascension of Group A] will be raptured [“caught up”: **ἀρπάζω (*harpázō*)**: Latin: *raptus*] together with Group A in the clouds to join a meeting with the Lord in the atmosphere of the first heaven, and so we all shall be with the Lord forever. (EXT)