

## 1 Thessalonians 4: 16b-18

### “Just do it”

#### I.) Intro.

#### II.) Vs. 16b-18 The Comfort of Being Caught Up

##### I.) Intro.

In 1990 this article appeared in the L.A. times: CLEVELAND — A woman finished her first marathon Sunday after mistakenly entering the 26-mile Revco-Cleveland Marathon instead of the 10K event in which she had intended to compete. *“I thought the marathon had already started,”* said Georgene Johnson, 42, of Akron. *“So I just took off with the rest of the pack.”* Both races had the same starting lines but four miles into the race, she realized something was wrong because the turnaround point was nowhere in sight. She ran up to a male runner and asked, *“This is the 10K, isn't it?”* She was then told she was running in the marathon. She said she, *“felt so dumb that she just stood there and started to cry.”* She even asked a police officer to drive her back to the starting line to compete in the 10K but the officer didn't have a patrol car. She thought about quitting but right in front of her was a man running and on the back of his shirt was the Nike phrase, *“Just do it.”* ***So she did!*** She finished her first marathon in 4 hours, 4 minutes, good enough for 83rd place in the women's division. She was asked some time later about her experience and said, *“This isn't the race I trained for. This isn't the race I entered. But, for better or worse, this is the race I'm in.”* How about it saint's has your Christian race of 10K turned into a Marathon? Well Paul has some *“Just do it”* words for you to keep you in the race!

#### IV.) Vs. 16b-18 The Comfort of Being Caught Up

On a side note let's deal with Israel's feasts and how they relate to a Pre-Tribulation rapture of the church. This is one of those areas where godly people disagree: "*Will the rapture happen before the tribulation period, during the tribulation period, or after?*"

Both 1 Cor. 15 as well as this verse speaks of this trumpet or shofar being blown at the rapture. I think this gives us a clue as to when the rapture will happen. According to Lev. 23 there were seven Holy "*convocations*" or sacred assemblies the Lord gave to Israel. The word "*convocations*" literally means "*rehearsal*". ***These seven feasts were to be a rehearsal for the real thing.*** As you look at them they fall upon certain months of the Jewish calendar.

- 1.) **Passover:** Is on the 14th of Nisan or March - April. ***This is when Jesus was killed as the Lamb of God.***
- 2.) **Unleavened Bread:** Is on the 15th of Nisan, again March - April. ***This is when the sinless body of Jesus was buried.***
- 3.) **First Fruits:** Is on the 16th of Nisan. ***This is when Jesus rose from the dead and became the "first fruits" of those who would be risen from the dead.***
- 4.) **Feast of Weeks or Pentecost:** Is on the 6th of Sivan or May - June. ***This is when Jesus birthed the Church.*** Notice that there is a big span of months

with no feasts. The picture is Jesus has birthed the church and we have been here on the earth being the instruments of His word and grace.

- 5.) **Feast of Trumpets:** This feast occurs on the 1-2 of Tishri or Sept. - Oct. The Feast of Trumpets happens right after the seven weeks of mourning Sefira, (July - Aug.) which was where they remembered that their temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B. C. Oddly enough the second temple would be destroyed in the same month on 70 A. D. The Temple was the place of unbroken fellowship with the living God so when the temple was destroyed Israel could no longer offer sacrifices to God. The feast of Trumpets, “*Rosh Hashanah*”, is the Jewish New Year. It is the festival of celebration and days of joy and holiness. It is “*Rosh Hashanah*” that the Jews remember the binding of Isaac upon the altar and God granting Abraham a Lamb Himself for a sacrifice. ***This is the time frame in succession, the time when the church will be gathered together to be with him in great joy.***
- 6.) **Day of Atonement:** On the 10th of Tishri (September- October) you have “*Yom Kippur*” ***a day when the Jews are given a rest for the affliction, which will take place at the end of the Great tribulation, when Jesus returns to give rest for His people.***
- 7.) **Feast of Tabernacles:** This is the last of the seven feast days on the 22nd of Tishri (September- October). ***This feast is to remind them that God tabernacled among them during the time in the wilderness and of course will again do so during the millennial reign of Jesus.***

**Looking at the Jewish Feasts in light of biblical prophecy;** “*All of the feast days have happened up to the feast of trumpets, the rapture of the church which will be followed by the return of Jesus and His millennial reign.*”

As I look at the different views concerning the rapture of the church:

- First it appears that the rapture has to happen before the great tribulation which clearly does not fit the post tribulation position.
- Second the mid tribulation does not work either when you consider Rev. 1: 19 and 4:1. In the Rev 1:19 John outlines the book of Revelation into three specific time frames,
  - 1.) The things which you have seen
  - 2.) The things which are
  - 3.) The things which will take place after these things.

It is after the time frame of the church that John hears a trumpet saying “*come up here*”. The rest of the book speaks of the great tribulation. A fact that is further brought out as the word church appears 19 times in the book but it doesn’t appear during the seven year tribulation period.

Vs. 16b “**And the dead in Christ will rise first.**” At the rapture of the church those who have died and are in the presence of the Lord will rise first. This does not mean that He will reunite them with their old body, for Paul tells us that in 1 Cor. 15:35 the resurrection of the human body is like the growing of a plant from a seed. The flower is not the identical seed as the plant, yet the seed produces the plant. **So we Christians shall receive glorified bodies like the body of Jesus.**

Vs. 17 The word's rendered "caught up" in Greek har-PAD-zo and translated into Latin is "raptus" where we get our English word **rapture**. The word carries **five ideas**:

- 1.) **To catch away speedily**: It's the same word used to describe Philip being taken away after he led the Ethiopian to Christ. **When the Lord returns, we who are alive will be caught away quickly, in the twinkling of an eye.** Thus we should live every moment of our lives as if He were going to take us quickly.
- 2.) **To seize by force**: This speaks of the enemies attempt to keep someone captive. Saint's it is foolish to allow the world of things to be so captivating as to be seized by force.
- 3.) **To claim for one's own self**: Here the picture of the rapture is from the Lord's view claiming a bride for Himself.
- 4.) **To move to a new place**: Jesus said that He was going to prepare a place for us, so when he comes he is taking us to that place. That's the picture here.
- 5.) **To rescue from danger**: Clearly we are rescued form the danger of the wrath of God poured out upon an un-repenting world.

The word "meet" means "meeting a royal person". **This is an everlasting meeting for we will always be with the Lord. The goal of redemption is not just to rescue us from judgment it is to bring us to Jesus. There we will not only be reunited with Jesus but also with those depart loved ones who are in Christ!**

Vs. 18 **We are told that these word are to be a comfort to believers. During the great tribulation we know that roughly 3 ½ billion people will die, I suggest to you that these**

words will offer no comfort for post tribulation believer or even the mid tribulation believers but they sure do offer hope to Pre-tribulation believers!

There is grave stone in an old British cemetery that reads, "Pause, my friend, as you walk by; as you are now, so once was I. As I am now, so you will be. Prepare, my friend, to follow me!" Some guy added a few lines to the epitaph: "To follow you is not my intent, until I know which way you went!" Do you know which way you are going? Are these words a comfort to you?