Consider this thought; what if you were the last person saved just before Jesus returned in the rapture? What if the last person that will ever be saved is actually saved in our service today? What if it were a little boy, or a little girl? What if it was a mother, or a father? One day the Lord is going to return in what we call the rapture. The word rapture isn’t mentioned in the Bible, but neither is the word Trinity. Just because the Bible doesn’t mention something doesn’t mean it is not so. The word rapture is an eschatological term meaning – a time when all Christian believers living and dead will rise into heaven and join Jesus Christ. It is from the Latin word, “rapere” which means to be caught up. All eyes are on the Middle East today, as they should be. We need to be ready, but we do not need to be fearful. Sorrow looks back. Worry looks all around. But hope looks up. The Rapture of the church is the blessed hope.

Takeaway:
The bible is a book filled with the mercy of God. However, there is a time limit set on God’s mercy. If you allow that time to expire, you will then forfeit God’s mercy for His wrath.

I. What is the Mystery of the Rapture?

Revelation 4:1 (NKJV) After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice, which I heard, was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NKJV) But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 (NKJV) Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

II. Who is the Rapture For?

Revelation 4:4 (NKJV) Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads.

Luke 17:34-36 (NKJV) I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. 35 Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. 36 Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left.

Takeaway:
The rapture will take some people to heaven and it will leave some people here for the tribulation.
III. When Will the Rapture Take Place?

Revelation 4:1 (NKJV) After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice, which I heard, was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.”

Takeaway:
The return of the Lord Jesus is always near. It is always close. It would be good for us to remember that the Apostle Paul was expecting Jesus to return in his own lifetime.

Mark 13:32-33 (NKJV) But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Take heed, watch, and pray; for you do not know when the time is.

Matthew 24:38 (NKJV) For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark.

Matthew 24:42 (NKJV) Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

Matthew 24:44 (NKJV) Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 (NKJV) Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

IV. Why is the Rapture Coming?

Revelation 4:2-5 (NKJV) Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. 3 And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. 4 Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. 5 And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thundering’s, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

V. What is the Motive for the Rapture?

1. Reception (John 14:1-3)

2. Rescue (I Thessalonians 1:9-10)

3. Reunion (I Thessalonians 4:17-18)