

# THE PATHFINDER

#269.15

## THE RAPTURE QUESTION

(Part 3)

### 1 THESSALONIANS 4:16-17

IN A VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL

IN A TRUMPET

CAUGHT UP

IN CLOUDS

IN LIKE MANNER

IN THE AIR

"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." *1 Thessalonians 4:16-17*.

As we said before, let us abandon all hopes of a worldwide evacuation of all the born again Christians, and the end of the world, especially since it is well past the expiration dates for when many people worldwide forecasted it was to happen, and I write this while it is still the early part of September. Instead, let our loins be gird about with the word of truth. Let us be made free and ready to be seized as we hear our Lord Jesus Christ in His voice, in the voice of **He who is the only Archangel**, in His shout, and in His trumpet from on high! What an awakening, charging, quickening word by which to be assembled, to set us in His holy convocation, to draw us together with Him in His eternal embrace wherein we shall ever be! Moreover, all this is not a onetime event that will be here one moment to never be heard again.

But rather, it is an onrushing, living sound that reverberates within our souls on an on until perfection is reached for all who are awakened and have ears to hear.

Some feel that the apostle Paul had some thoughts that seemed to say differently; but we believe that upon giving what he said close attention, it will be seen that what he wrote is not contrary to our opening statement.

By not looking into the depth of God's mysteries, the above verses in Thessalonians could appear that way and could be seen as if they are in harmony with Catholic priests Francisco Ribera and Emmanuel Lacunza, along with John Nelson Darby, Edward Irving, and Cyrus Ingerson Scofield's teachings on the *rapture* (ref. #267.15, Part1). We are persuaded, however, this concept came not from inspiration by the Holy Spirit but from misreading Margaret McDonald's vision and failing to understand some of the scriptures and spiritual principles. Coupled with this teaching came the concept of heavenly Jerusalem coming down to earth (*Revelation 21:10*), assuming that this was speaking of a literal city. To get the true meaning of what is being said here, it is a must to see that it is speaking of SPIRITUAL things and not natural. For instance, how can the heavenly Jerusalem be a natural city when *Hebrews 12:22* makes it plain that we have "...NOW come...UNTO THE CITY of the living God, **THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM.**" It is clear that this city is not one of natural bricks and mortar, and neither is it somewhere in the natural heavens beyond our solar system. For we are presently abiding in it which will be made evident in due time.

We are now in this heavenly city; but it is hidden from view to the natural eye. When that which is of the heavens descends to the earth, then the natural eye is opened to see it. Until then, it remains hidden in the realm of the spirit. And likewise with the Lord who descends from heaven. His feet are presently walking upon the earth in his body of you and me, but He is yet in the heavens.

Isn't it true that He abides in us? Is He not in our own heavens and we in His? And don't we know He is abiding in the Holy of holies of His temple, which we are? Of course, we know these things. And when He descends from that realm within, and makes Himself known in the air of our minds, we see Him. More on this later.

*The rapture* is a term that is never used in the Bible, although, there are many words and scriptures that do mean the same thing. *Caught up* (Grk. *harpazo*) is one of those words. The World Book Dictionary gives us this definition of the word: "*rapture, A strong feeling that absorbs the **mind**; very great joy. A feeling of being lifted high in **mind and spirit**; being filled with and completely taken up in **feeling, delight, or bliss.**"* With this, I believe we would be justified in teaching about being "raptured" (in mind and spirit as the word implies), but we would err if we taught it contrary to what the scriptures and the Spirit have to say about it.

Let us read again *1 Thessalonians 4:16-17*, but paraphrase as we incorporate the Greek and see what might lie beneath the surface: "*The Lord **IN** a command, **IN** the voice of the Chief Messenger, and **IN** the trumpet of God will descend from the unreachable heavens, and*

*the anointed dead ones will be raised first; afterwards we the living ones, those being left over, at the same time with them shall be seized in clouds into a meeting of the Lord into air; and so in this manner with the Lord shall we always be."*

*IN a command, IN a voice, and IN a trumpet* all speak of *THE LORD HIMSELF* as being *IN* that which is spoken. In this we have *THREE* (indicating completeness) words (command, voice, and trumpet) that denote a word that is spoken. What then, would this signify, especially since the Lord Himself is *IN* each of them? We are familiar with the word **LOGOS** -- the very **ESSENCE, THOUGHT, and INTENT OF GOD IN MANIFESTATION**. Therefore, being that the Lord is *IN* these three words that convey a message, we can see that it is **HIM, THE LOGOS, WHICH IS SPOKEN**. It is the expression of the very substance of God Himself. It is the very thing which Jesus was declared to be in *Hebrews 1:3*. In other words, **Jesus in the pure and complete form of the living God is descending from the highest realm of our heavens and into the conscious realm of our spirit, soul, and body to give us something that will cause us to rise beyond our intractable imaginations!** What a **COMMAND**, what a **VOICE**, what a **TRUMPET! Praise God**, it is **THE LOGOS OF HIMSELF** that our mighty Lord and Chief Messenger is and will be descending with and **INTO** those who are his ministers of flaming fire. First, into the firstfruits and then into the world through the firstfruits. Not only does He come into His elect with the voice of a trumpeting commander, but when they are caught up to this place of the high calling of God, they will become that resounding trumpet of the Lord -- **The Logos revealing the Father of us all in a shout, in a command!**

**In a SHOUT (verse 16)** comes from the Greek word *keleuma* which means, "*a cry of incitement,*" and it comes from the word *keleuo* which means, "*to urge on; hail; to incite by word, i.e. order.*" *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*. Therefore, it is a **COMMAND TO BATTLE, A WAR CRY**. It is that in which the Lord is appearing.

Let our minds be stirred at this time with a question: If we are escaping from the enemy by-way-of a massive air-lift, just before Satan's wrath is turned loose on the world, **then why would a war cry be given to us?** When an army is incited to charge forward into battle they do not conquer by fleeing the fury of the enemy, but they win by attacking and overcoming him with superior forces. The Holy Spirit of God tells us eight different times in the book of Revelation what the inheritance will be to the ones who **OVERCOME, not to those who run!** There is a war to be won, dear saints, and the battle fields are in the regions of our own souls. We might as well face it, until we are apprehended by our Lord and we trumpet the victory on every front, we will never possess the kingdom of the heavens or the earth.

### **IN A VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL**

There are many voices in the land today, but only one speaks the **LOGOS OF GOD**, and it is the voice of **THE CHIEF MESSENGER** of the living God. Many are hearing the voices of the sages of ancient times, others have their ears tuned to the prophets of old, and some are hearing the voices from extraterrestrial beings; a few are communing with the familiar spirits

of the dead, numerous others think their own thoughts and voices are that of Christ's, but the multitudes are simply hearing the clamoring voices of men. However, there is only One voice that will cause one to be lifted in his soul from the realms of dust and ascend into the heavens of Christ -- the voice of **JESUS!** All other voices are facades that masquerade as messengers of God. They are nothing but influential winds that move and toss the insecure waves of the troubled sea.

### IN A TRUMPET

**TRUMPET** in scripture speaks of a particular message of God that is being conveyed to His people through chosen vessels of Himself. When the various notes were heard, the people understood what they were to do. The command was through musical instruments. Such a message was more clear than when one was speaking audible words. The notes were more austere and carried much farther than mere words alone. Today, it is the same -- we can speak words from the intellect, as men, which is not all bad, but when the word is spoken by the Spirit it is tremendous, it is overwhelming, it is life. It is then that we resonate from Zion the high calling of our God as we become His polished silver trumpets of salvation.

In the Old Testament we see the trumpets as types of a living reality that find their fulfillment in the Melchisedec priests of today. For example, the priests were commissioned to sound the trumpets of silver on various occasions. They were blown to assemble the people together for solemn days as well as for occasions of gladness. They were also blown over offerings and sacrifices. The primary thing we want to notice, however, is the majority of the recordings concerning the sounding of trumpets in the Bible were when the people were praising God for giving them a new king, praising God for being victorious in battle, or they were blown **just prior to going into battle**. The latter was a covenant of the Lord to Israel, declaring that, if they would blow the trumpets before going to war, He would remember them and give them power to destroy all their enemies. It is no different today, for the covenant still stands; and as we trumpet the victory praise of the voice of the Archangel (Jesus the Chief Messenger) we will see it as it was in times past. The priest blew the trumpets for Joshua at Jericho causing the walls to fall (**Joshua 6**), and Gideon's army of 300 trumpeted at Moreh and destroyed the armies of the Midianites, the Amalekites, and all the armies of the east (**Judges 7**). When that seventh and last trumpet sounds in our own hearts, it will be a **VICTORY CRY OF PRAISE TO OUR GOD** for the great war to be won once and for all. This praise, as it reaches its high crescendo and is in perfect harmony with the preceding six trumpets that have already been blowing, will be the blast, the final **LOGOS of TRUTH, KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING, and PRAISE** that will put Satan under our feet once and for all. When the victory of God's elect is secure they will sound the message of this great triumph which will cause the whole world to be shaken off its feeble foundations of iron mingled with clay! And this is O.K., let it be, for there must be a shaking and removing before there can be a planting and rebuilding! (**Jeremiah 1:10 & Hebrews 12:25-29**). This is the purpose of the sons of God -- that of delivering all the groaning creation from bondage of corruption and into the glorious

liberty of being **born of God (Romans 8:19-21)!**

Can we not agree that we have been given the ministry of reconciliation (**2 Corinthians 5:18-19**) in order to set creation free (**Romans 8:19-21**)? This being the case, then our cry should be one with the prayer of our Lord Jesus: "**I pray NOT that thou shouldst take them OUT OF THE WORLD, but that thou shouldst KEEP THEM FROM THE EVIL.**" John 17:15. Therefore, sons of God, if ye be sons and not bastards (**Hebrews 12:7-8**), let us not look for a way out of tribulation; but rather, let us **look unto Him** who will give us **victory over the evil**, and thereby, **bring an end to tribulation for all mankind**.

### CAUGHT UP

The Greek word *caught up* is *harpazo*, meaning *to seize*. It is a derivative of *haireomai* which means "*to take for oneself*." The following are the scriptures where *harpazo* is used: "...and the violent **take it by force (seizes it).**" Matthew 11:12. "...Then cometh the wicked one, and **catcheth away (seizes)** that which was sown in his heart." Matthew 13:19. "...And the wolf **catcheth (seizes)** them, and scattereth the sheep." John 10:12. "...Neither shall any man **pluck (seize)** them out of my hand...and no man is able to **pluck (seize)** them out of My Father's hand." John 10:28 & 29. "...With fear, **pulling (seizing)** them out of the fire. Jude 1:23. "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God Knoweth:) such an one **caught up (seized)** to the third heaven." 2 Corinthians 12:3. "...And her child was **caught up (seized)** unto God..." Revelation 12:5. And, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up (*seized*) together with them..." 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

Not only from the meaning of this word do we see that IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH **DIRECTION**, such as being caught **UPWARDLY** into the air, but by taking note of how the original writers of the New Testament used the word also gives us definition of the word. Therefore, seeing that the word simply is telling us of a particular **STATE OF BEING** one might find himself -- namely, in the disposition of being **SEIZED**, then it would be good for us to get our minds off of where we thought we might be **GOING** and on to **WHAT WE ARE DEFINITELY BECOMING**. What it boils down to, brethren, is this: When we hear the **LOGOS OF GOD** we will find ourselves so completely **SEIZED OF OUR LORD**, and with such resurrection power, that we will never fall to the pulling gravity of the flesh again.

Flying away into the clouds would no doubt be an exciting experience, especially to those who love the thought of doing so without the aid of airplanes or rockets; but in comparison to what is happening inwardly of being *raptured* into and by the Spirit of the living God, causes everything else to pale. If being physically raptured is our hope, oh, dear saints of God, how miserably we have robbed ourselves, for there is something much greater. Therefore, never let it be said that we are trying to rob anyone of anything, for our desire is to give. Hopefully, however, the myth of becoming human missiles will be removed from people's minds. If this is accomplished, we do hope some realities will take the place of what some would consider

a great loss. But how could it be a loss if it is replaced with the reality of the king of glory Himself? -- **Jesus Christ!**

### IN CLOUDS

At a glance there does not seem to be anything very significant in this term "**IN the CLOUDS**" other than the Greek omits the definite article THE. There is no apparent, hidden Greek word here to draw from that would change or enhance the meaning of this thought. However, there are times when it is proper to look at the spiritual meaning of various statements recorded in the Bible to see what is really being said. We believe this is one of those times and areas of scripture, especially when we consider the other thoughts contained in these verses that are associated with the clouds. We can also take note of some other scriptures that should help us in seeing what clouds in the Bible are so often referring to: "For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto **THE CLOUDS.**" *Psalm 57:10*; "Ascribe ye strength unto God: His excellence is over Israel, and His **strength is in THE CLOUDS...The God of Israel is He that giveth strength and power unto HIS PEOPLE.**" (*Psalms 68:34 & 35*); and "Who maketh the **CLOUDS HIS CHARIOT.**" (*Psalm 104:3*).

It has been made clear that our citizenship is **IN THE HEAVENS (ref. Hebrews 12:22-24)**, and looking at the above verses, can we not say that **THE SAINTS are in fact those clouds?** We should be able to, for God's truths are given to **PEOPLE** rather than to natural clouds. His strength and power is also ascribed to **PEOPLE** and not literal clouds (there is indeed power in natural clouds, but the context of Ps. 68:35 is referring to people). And most certainly, **THE SAINTS OF THE MOST HIGH** make up the chariot in which God rides and manifests His power and majesty to the world, rather than by the clouds of the blue skies above. The clouds spoken of in the fourth chapter of Thessalonians are no less the same. When it speaks of being seized in clouds, it is not speaking of the natural water clouds from which our rain comes, but it is referring to God's people who make up the heavenly host. **Isaiah 55:10-13** attests to this by saying that **WE** shall be as the rain that comes down out of heaven (rain is condensed clouds) to water the earth which causes the whole world to come alive and to break forth into joyous singing. **Hebrews 11:40 and 12:1** also speaks of people being clouds, i.e. all the patriarchs who have died in faith are called a **CLOUD OF WITNESSES.**

### IN LIKE MANNER

The coming of the Lord in 70 A.D. was entirely different than His coming at Pentecost. His coming in Matthew 24 was fulfilled in 70 A.D., while that which Jesus told the twelve in the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of John was fulfilled at Pentecost. That coming has been flowing since that phenomenal day, a day that so many have failed to see as one of His comings. It is a mystery that the words of the two men in white apparel have been so routinely misunderstood, even though it is plainly stated how He would come again after He ascended:

"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went

up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" **Acts 1:9-11**.

It is strange that so many have not noticed the meaning of this term, *in like manner*. Terry Crisp has done the ground work and unveiled what a number of others have failed to do. He wrote in one of his publications:

"The main obstacle many have had with this approach presents itself in the words spoken in Acts 1:11. '*Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye here gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come **in like manner** as ye have seen Him go into heaven.*' To those who are inclined to reading the scriptures with natural understanding, this disallows for any variance in the way we see Christ's appearing. But when we read that Jesus would return *in like manner* as He was seen going away, we find it necessary to ask the question, what is meant by '*in like manner*'? Does it mean in the exact manner? Or does it mean in a similar manner? There is a big difference, you know. We would draw your attention to the fact that this phrase '*in like manner*' comes from the Greek word *tropos*, and is also used by Jesus in Matthew 23:37... '*O Jerusalem...how often I would have gathered thy children together, **even as** (*tropos*) a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings....*' No one in their right mind would assume that Jesus wanted everyone in Jerusalem to actually come under His outstretched arms, in exactly the same way that chicks seek refuge under a mother hen. That would be ridiculous. We understand that He was speaking figuratively here. In similar fashion, we could say that during His incarnation, Jesus came *in like manner* as the spotless lamb that was sacrificed at the Feast of Passover. It was similar to, but not an exact duplication of the prototype. After His crucifixion, we could say that He was in the heart of the earth three days and three nights *in like manner* as Jonah's experience in the belly of the fish (Matthew 12:40). We could also say that He carried out His duties behind the veil *in like manner* as the Great High Priest, not in an earthly tabernacle, as did the priests who came before Him, but into heaven itself, in order to make atonement for our sins (Hebrews 9:11-12, 24). Many examples like this could be mentioned, but this should adequately demonstrate the fact that *in like manner* does not necessarily mean in exact manner.

"...We could point out that in every instance where the coming of the Lord is mentioned in Scripture, and see it is not possible that they could all refer to the same event. The fact of the matter is, there are many different comings of the Lord, and six different Greek words which are used in the New Testament to describe those comings or appearances. A careful study of the original text will prove that this is so. Among these references to His return, some of them are applicable to a future event or events. Some of them have present-day applications, describing ways in which the Lord routinely comes *to*, *with*, and *in* His people. And some even refer to comings which have already occurred, such as His coming on the Day of Pentecost, and His coming in judgment to Jerusalem in 70 A.D." -- End quote. (<http://www.goodseedpublications.com/> Zarah & Pharez Part X.)

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly **there came a sound** *from heaven* as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. **And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit**, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" **Acts 2:1-4**.

**A cloud received Him out of their sight.** Did this not happen in *like manner* ten days later? *In like manner, but not exactly the same way, a cloud of 120 received Him.* And is it not the same today? *A cloud of people in like manner received Him out of sight from those of the world.* We, the cloud that resides in the heavens, have received Him; but He is not in sight of those of the world, and it is the same with those of whom we have been speaking. Are they not *gazing steadfastly toward heaven*, looking into the heavens, into the sky, for His coming?

But the natural clouds are not where He is found nor from where He comes. I do not think Jesus was seen as a flaming tongue of fire falling from the sky on the day of Pentecost, and then streaming through the open windows before baptizing the 120 with His Spirit. But He did, however, descend. He was manifested from the heavens of the Spirit and suddenly appeared as cloven tongues of fire, and His cloud of witnesses received Him.

Remember? The two men in white apparel said: "*This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*"

They **did not say**: *This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in the exact same manner as ye have seen him go into heaven, but in like manner.*

Again, *in what manner was Jesus taken?* Was it not by a cloud and into heaven? And was it not *in like manner* that **a cloud of 120 witnesses received Him from heaven when Pentecost had fully come? He went up and came again in like manner.** It was HEAVEN that He was taken into, and *it was HEAVEN* from where He came *in like manner* to fill the 120. A small cloud of about 120 first received Him, then 3,000, later on it was 5,000, and finally the receiving cloud grew so that it could not be numbered, of which we are members.

Even though the two men said *this same Jesus shall come in like manner, it is not easy for some to equate the ascended Jesus as **the same as the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.*** Nevertheless, the two are the same, and Paul confirmed it: "**Now the Lord is that Spirit...**" 2 Corinthians 3:17. Moreover, let us not forget that Jesus said: "**I will come again**, and receive you unto myself; that **where I am**, there ye may be also....He dwelleth with you, and **shall be IN you. I will** not leave you comfortless: **I will** come to you" John 14:3, 17-18, and He came as promised to those He was talking to, as well as the others when Pentecost had fully come.

Jesus saying, "**I will come to you**," *in John 14* was something entirely different than what He said in *Matthew 24* about "**the end of all things**" and "**the end of the world.**" He was first letting them know that after leaving, *He would return and become one with them; but the end of all things being at hand, and the end of the world had to do with the end of Jerusalem, the Temple, and their Kingdom.* In *John 14*, Jesus spoke of coming to His own in the power



*of holiness; but in Matthew 24 He spoke of coming to a rebellious people in fiery judgment.*

Scholars have viewed certain scriptures as presenting irreconcilable problems. Such as, "...The end of all things **is at hand** 1 Peter 4:7," "...The Lord **is at hand** Philippians 4:5;" "...the coming of the Lord **draweth nigh...** the judge standeth **at the door** James 5:8,9. They assume that these verses speak of the final judgment of mankind of someday in the future; yet each one of those citations indicated it would take place during that generation's day.

These verses have been a challenge for ages, with some saying that the apostles were wrong, while others illogically reason that after they penned those prophetic words there was a break in time, a 2000 year fracture, and now they say that the *coming of Jesus is really at hand, He is finally near, He is now truly at the door*. Frankly, there is no justification to be found anywhere in the scriptures that God takes a prophecy and chops it up into segments of time; but this is the only way some can make the scriptures fit their *end-time* beliefs and nefarious predictions. This has been an ongoing problem, and it will continue being a problem for them; for as before, all their predictions and dates will fail, and the flow of events will never correspond to the misinterpreted scriptures that speak of our Lord's coming. The problem dissolves, however, when we understand that the time factor of His coming in Matthew 24 was for that generation and not ours. It was not for a generation 2000 years later. When the timeline of "**this**" generation is understood, mountains of eschatological illusions crumble, and men's paper castles go up in smoke as they are set ablaze by the word of truth. Every man's works will surely be tried by fire, and that which is not of God will be burned. I believe the smell of smoke is in the air!

When we read of things in heaven -- clouds, rain, lightning, hail, thunder, or even a city -- it is generally speaking of those with specific characteristics who are abiding in Christ rather than having their minds set on the soiled elements of the earth. When considering the clouds, we should be able to see that it is alluding to people in the same manner as when we read, "**Ye are come unto...the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem....**" Hebrews 12:22). This is a statement about **people** and not buildings. This city is mentioned again in **Revelation 21:9-10**, and before it is called **THE GREAT CITY** it is said to be **THE BRIDE, THE LAMBS WIFE. Again -- PEOPLE -- not buildings!**

This city was then seen descending out of heaven from God, like the rain of Isaiah 55:10, which is manifested on the lower realm to bless the earth. Until there is a descending from the realm of the heavens of Christ's habitation, the inhabitants of the earth will never see the glory of God and be set into the liberty of being His offspring. **It will be from the descending rains of God that every eye of all flesh shall see His glory and be drawn to this holy city to worship the One they sought after and came to love. See Acts 17:27, Isaiah 55:10-13, 40 3-5. 66:23, Revelation 15:4, etc..**

Therefore, brethren, we will remain right here with our feet upon the earth, yet residing in the heavens, as it was said of Jesus in **John 3:13**. His elect will become rain to a parched

and thirsty world of humanity. Regardless of whether we are clouds or the city, which we are both and even more, it speaks somewhat of being the same thing. With either, we first win our heavenly wars and are established in the heavens of Christ, then we are made known to those of the dust and will minister life so they might also overcome and live. However, if we should really be lifted into the literal clouds, as it has been supposed, how could we ever be of any good to the creation who awaits our appearing so they can be liberated and set free from the bondage of corruption as Paul wrote in **Romans 8:19-21**? Needless to say, we would be of no value at all; but it is a different story to those who are **CAUGHT UP (SEIZED -- HARPAZO)** as was Paul in **2 Corinthians 12:2** -- and they will ultimately bring total deliverance to the groaning creation.

### IN THE AIR

*"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air." 1 Thessalonians 4:17.* When read from ground level, it would certainly appear that there will be a physical lift-off of our bodies to rendezvous with our Lord in the sky and hope that it would take place right overhead from where we live. For if His appearing is in China, we would have to sail around the world for the meeting. Wherever it might be, our imaginations can see Him like a huge vacuum cleaner that is sucking the millions of saints from all over the world to Himself. The movie, "Left Behind," should have used such special effects. The human mind could have a field day thinking about it, but we will give it a rest.

Before assuming such a literal event is to take place, let it be more spiritually realistic as we examine some words in the Greek and see if some beneficial light can be shed on the thought. The words are *caught up* (*harpazo, seized*), *meet* (*apantesin, a meeting*), and *in* (*eis, into*).

Translating the verse using these words and more precisely from the Greek interlinear, it would be: *"We the living ones...shall be **seized in clouds**, into a **meeting of the lord into air.**"* Words such as these may not seem to be important enough to even consider; but they play a large roll in accurately understanding the intent by showing the relationship between a noun or pronoun and some other word in the sentence. In this case, the word *ones* in the part, *the living ones*, is the noun, and the preposition *in* tells the reader what position the living ones are in with reference to the clouds. Namely, they are right in the very **midst of** or **compassed about with clouds**. There is no movement or direction involved at all, they are simply **inside clouds**. On the other hand, the word *into* lets us know what is the living ones relationship to *a meeting and air*. *Into* has something to do with *movement, direction, and destination*. In other words, *we the living ones, those who are within and make up the cloud of witnesses right now, when the trumpet is blown, will be seized by the Spirit and taken into an instructional meeting with the Lord of lords which takes place in the realm of the conscious soul (spiritually called air).*

The word *MEETING* (*apantesin*) appears four times in the New Testament (**Matthew**

25:1 & 6, Acts 28:15, and 1 Thessalonians 4:17), and it always carries the thought of a **CONFERENCE, an ASSEMBLY, or a CONVOCATION**. It means much more than just merely coming in contact with our Lord and standing in His presence. In essence, we are called to a **HOLY CONVOCATION** to when the voice of His trumpet is heard. This **HOLY ASSEMBLY**, if we will notice, has a certain "**AIR**" about it, and that air is certainly not that of the sky where jet airliners fly but is speaking of a **spiritual spectrum of life**. All through the Bible, it is very common to find natural elements of the earth that refer to spiritual realities in people's lives, especially with God's people. So what we have here is an analogy of signs and symbols that refer to spiritual realities.

*AIR* comes from the Greek word *AER*, and according to **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance** it means, "**TO BREATHE unconsciously, i.e. respire; by analogy to blow; 'air' (as natural circumambient).**" The same word is used in **Ephesians 2:1-2** which speaks of Satan: "**And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the AIR, the SPIRIT that now worketh in the children of disobedience.**" When we look closely, we can see *THE COURSE (spirit) OF THE WORLD (soul)* is synonymous with *THE PRINCE (spirit) OF THE AIR (soul)*; therefore, the more we know about *the world (the susceptible soul of man) and its course (its ruling spirit)* the more we will know about this infamous prince and will be able to deal appropriately with him.

The air, according to the above verse, is the realm from which Satan has dominion. Does this then mean that the only place he has any power or authority is where there is **BREATHABLE AIR**? Not by any means. If this were the case, all one would have to do in order to escape the tempting influence of this lying ruler of darkness is to find someplace where there is no air, like the moon, for instance. We would, however, have to take along some air tanks in order to live; and being that he supposedly resides in "*the air*," does this mean he would be contained in the air tanks and every time we took a breath of air he would be inhaled into our lungs? Or let us think about it this way. The next time we get infuriated with someone and hatred builds up to the point we might feel like killing them, why don't we just go jump in the lake with all the air expelled from our lungs and lay submerged about six feet below the surface for awhile? This is sure to get us over our anger in a hurry, because in this location there would be no air around us or in us for the devil to exercise his power through. Therefore, all our evil thoughts would vanish in a flash; that is, until we came up for a breath of *air*, and the tempter would supposedly enter back into our minds. Silly and foolish thoughts, to say the least.; but this type of thinking is what we could come up with when we insist on looking at all these things only in the literal sense rather than in the spirit and truth of the matter.

It is good that Paul wrote in *Ephesians 2:2*: "**...according to the COURSE OF THIS WORLD, according to the PRINCE OF THE AIR**" -- for it makes it much easier to see that **THE AIR** is referring to the realm wherein lies the **WORLDLY LUST OF THE EYE, THE LUST OF THE FLESH, AND THE PRIDE OF LIFE**.

The unregenerated soul, of course, moves and has its being in **THE WORLD**. It is moved by the power that is at home in its air, and it is from within this, *THE AIR OF THE SOUL*, that Satan was able to gain the title, "**...THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD.**" *John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11*. Hence, whoever sits upon the throne of the soul makes the earth his footstool and becomes its prince, whether it is Christ or Satan. Although Satan was destroyed and lost the war against Jesus (**Hebrews 2:12**), he is still sitting as a great dragon in some form or another on the throne of most people's lives and imaginations, and they believe that this dragon that has been magnified to such heights of power is much too great to ever be conquered. Therefore, in order to escape such a formidable, unconquerable foe, the rapture is very necessary as an avenue of evasion. However, those who have truly been "raptured" (*seized*) out of earthy lusts and temptations are able to overcome all the imaginations of the mind and cast them down to establish God's kingdom in and upon the earth. This victory over the enemy, whether real or imagined, is seen when the Lord of lords descends from the third heaven of the holy of holies and into the second heaven of the holy place, which is *in the air of our minds, in the course of our world*. In this descent He makes Himself known in a war cry which causes the sons of God to be *SEIZED INTO HIS LORDSHIP!* It is at this time that Satan will be removed from the throne of our souls, and the apprehended ones of Christ, those who make up the clouds of heaven, will possess that throne and rule the kingdom forever!

We see an example of this in **Revelation 12:5-11**, where the "**man child**" (**MALE SON, Grk.**) is **CAUGHT UP** (*seized, harpazo*) **unto God and His throne, and as a result the war in heaven ensues and ends in glory for those who love not their lives unto the death!**

To be continued...

Elwin R. Roach