

49. It was reasonable for Paul to conclude this since there was nothing in Scripture to indicate another prophetic event would precede it.
50. However, after almost 2,000 years since Paul wrote, we find ourselves with the same conclusion: “Why not now?” Because of the testimony of the farmer:
- James 5:8** You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord [**the Rapture**] is near. (NASB)
51. We have no more information regarding the day of the Rapture than he did. He was comfortable to remain patient. The seeds were in the field. He anticipated the early and late rains. He was prepared to harvest his crops at the appropriate time.
52. Although the prophecy of the Rapture indicates it is imminent, it does not reveal any catalyst for the event. This is known only to the Father (Mark 13:32*d*). Its execution is in the divine decree about which we are not aware.
53. Therefore, to what conclusion are we forced? The Rapture, being imminent, may occur in our lifetimes, but it may not. Consequently, we are to use its imminency as a motivation to grow in grace, advance to spiritual maturity, and make spiritual growth our top priority.
54. In James 5:8, the coming of the Lord at the Rapture is indicated by the noun *parousía* [pär-ü-sē-ə].
55. It has been transliterated into the English dictionaries and capitalized, “Parousia,” and defined as the Second Coming. In some contexts, it does, but in others, which we are noting, it refers to the Rapture of the Church.
56. What follows is an interesting and insightful synopsis of the words *parousía*—“coming”—and *engízō* —“near”—regarding James’s comments on the Rapture:

In [James 5] verse 7, James urged believers to be patient in view of the fact of the Lord’s coming. Now he bases his exhortation to patience and spiritual firmness on the nearness of the Lord’s coming. The verb James uses, *engízō* (“is near”), occurs elsewhere in the New Testament in similar eschatological contexts.



We need to say something about the “nearness” idea as we find it here in James. Not much is gained from a consideration of the verb *engízō* itself—it denotes simply “nearness” in space or time. But what is crucial is to understand this “nearness” in the appropriate temporal framework: salvation history. With the death and resurrection of Jesus and pouring out of the Spirit, the “last days” have been inaugurated. This final age of salvation will find its climax in the return of Christ in glory. But—and here is the crucial point—the length of this age is unknown. Not even Jesus knew how long the “last days” would last (cf. Mark 13:32).¹ What this means is that the return of Christ, as the next event in the salvation-historical timetable, is, from the time of the early church to our own day, “near,” or “imminent.”

Every generation of Christians lives (or should live!) with the consciousness that the *parousía* could occur at any time and that one needs to make decisions and choose values based on that realization.

So it was as true in James’s day as it is in ours: we need to *be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near.*²

57. Our research into the doctrine of the *parousía* leaves us with the principle that James and the writer of Hebrews emphasize:

James 5:7 Therefore be patient [aorist active imperative of μακροθυμέω (*makrothuméō*): faith rest], brethren, until the Rapture of the church. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains.

v. 8 You too be patient; facilitate [aorist active imperative of στηρίζω (*stēρίζō*)] your soul’s doctrinal inventory, for the Rapture [παρουσία (*parousía*)] of the Lord is imminent [intensive perfect active indicative of ἐγγίζω (*engízō*)]. (EXT)

¹ “But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.”

² Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000), 224–25.



Hebrews 10:24 Let us repeatedly consider how to encourage fellow members of the local church from the source of the Royal Law and the Law of Freedom and from the source of the working objects of divine-good production,

v. 25 stop habitually forsaking the command to assemble ourselves together in the synagogue/church, as is the consistent behavior of certain reversionists, but encouraging them through your consistency; and even all the more as you see the day of the Rapture being imminent. (EXT)

4. Specific Details about the Rapture in:

1 Thessalonians 4:13 Now we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve like the rest who have no hope.

1. Ignorance of Bible doctrine is strategically the greatest failure of the Church-Age believer. This lack of knowledge is self-induced by lack of interest in serious study of the Bible.
2. Consequently, the believers at Thessalonica were confused. They learned from Paul about imminency but wrongly concluded that those who died would not be included in the Rapture.
3. The phrase, “those who are asleep” is Paul’s way of describing how the bodies of those who had died lay in their graves as if asleep.
4. The souls and spirits of those who have died are alive and functioning in the Third Heaven in interim bodies (see 2 Corinthians 5:8, “We ... would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.”)
5. Following physical death, unbelievers’ souls are retained in the Torments compartment of Hades until the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11–15).

1 Thessalonians 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also we believe that God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep as Christians.

v. 15 For we tell you this by the word of the Lord [ἐν λόγος κύριος (*en lógos kúrios*)³], that we who are alive and are left before the coming of the Lord, will surely not go ahead of those who have fallen asleep.

³ “The word of the Lord is a technical expression in Old Testament literature, often referring to a divine prophetic utterance. In the New Testament it occurs 15 times. As in the Old Testament, this phrase focuses on the prophetic nature and divine origin of what has been said” (The NET Bible [Dallas: Biblical Studies Press, 1996–2005], 2311sn19).



v. 16 For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel,⁴ and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

6. In the angelic order of battle, two archangels are mentioned by name, Michael and Gabriel. They have command authority over the angels with the rank of Seraph with six wings as their designation of rank. Next, is the rank of Cherub with four wings as their designation of rank. All other angels have the rank of pursuivant and have no designation of rank, thus wingless.
7. Michael's duties seem primarily to be associated with the nation of Israel while Gabriel is deployed with the angelic order of battle and the angelic college of heralds.
8. There are two sources of command for military activities in the ancient world, the voice command and the trumpet command. At the Rapture, it is the trumpet command that assembles the dead in Christ.

1 Thessalonians 4:17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be suddenly caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord. (NET)

9. The omnipotence of God raises the dead in Christ by replacing their former bodies of corruption with resurrection bodies of incorruption:

1 Corinthians 15:53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal puts on immortality.

v. 54 Now when this perishable puts on the imperishable, and this mortal puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will happen, "Death has been swallowed up in victory [Isaiah 25:8]."

v. 55 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting [Hosea 13:14]?" (NET)

10. The level of spiritual growth one attains in life determines the categories of Nike Awards one will receive at the Evaluation Tribunal of Christ and referenced in the letter to Philadelphia in:

⁴ Seraphim. The rank of some angelic beings. Each seraph is said to have six wings (Isaiah 6:2) including Michael and Gabriel, also classified in Scripture as "archangels." The apocryphal Book of Enoch names Raphael and Uriel as seraphim. Cherubim have four wings. The only one named is Lucifer in Ezekiel 28:14.