His method is sublime, His heart profoundly kind;  
God never is before His time, and never is behind.

**First Corinthians 15:52 Does not Teach the Rapture of the Church  
By Gary Whipple of** [**Beyond the Rapture**](http://www.bibleone.net/BeyondtheRapture.pdf)

**“Behold I Show You A Mystery”**

“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,...” ([1 Corinthians 15:51](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+15.51&t=NKJV)).

Contrary to popular belief, this verse, and those verses that immediately follow it do not teach the rapture of the church, but rather the second resurrection (the third order). Here the Holy Spirit wants us to know that the events of this 51st verse had been a mystery up until the time that the apostle Paul revealed it to the Corinthian church. On the other hand, the rapture was not a mystery to the early church. The Thessalonians were told that they should not be ignorant of the rapture ([1 Thessalonians 4:13-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+4.13-17&t=NKJV)), not that Paul was going to show them a mystery (Gr. “musterion” meaning a secret by silence). Also, this mystery of the 51st verse was not revealed until approximately four years after Paul had taught the truth of the rapture to the Thessalonian church. If the rapture had been the revealing of this mystery, then that mystery could not have been revealed here. For once a mystery is revealed, it is no longer a mystery.

**The Mystery of the Two Groups**

Within this mystery is the expression “we shall not all sleep.” These five words seem to add fuel to the argument that this is the rapture. Its proponents say that this proves it, since some will be dead and some will be alive at the resurrection. However, as we shall see, this expression cannot speak of the rapture, but rather of two groups of people in the second resurrection. Those who are asleep in Gehenna (the natural body being dead), and those who are alive in outer darkness. Someone may ask at this point, “why did the apostle use the word 'we'?” The answer could be that he could use no other term except "we" since the body of Christ can never be spiritually divided ([Ephesians 4:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+4.4&t=NKJV)).

**The Mystery of Change**

Still another portion of this verse that doesn’t fit the events of the rapture, are the words that are found here, and in the next verse.

“...but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” ([1 Corinthians 15:51-52](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+15.51-52&t=NKJV) [51b]).

No matter how hard one tries to honestly fit these verses into the rapture, his efforts will fail. Consider this: Those who are alive and dead here are both changed instantaneously and simultaneously (at the same moment of time), i.e. at the twinkling of an eye. This is in opposition to the rapture passage in [1 Thessalonians 4:16-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+4.16-17&t=NKJV) which declares that the dead will rise first, and then those who are alive will be caught up to be with them in the clouds. Therefore, these two verses speak of a different raising at a different time!

**The Mystery of the Last Trump**

This truth is further revealed when we read that the resurrection here occurs at the sound of a trumpet. And what kind of a trumpet? Our text says the last trump. And what is the last trump? It is the last [or ‘furthest’] in time. Many have written books on the last trump in an attempt to prove that the rapture will occur at the close of the great tribulation, at the sounding of the seventh trumpet. Others have taken this same approach to teach a partial rapture or a rapture in the middle of the tribulation. This mistranslation of the last trump has caused much error and confusion in opposition to a mountain of scriptural evidence that teaches the pre-tribulation rapture of the church. On the other hand, some of the great Bible teachers of the nineteenth century believed that there could be two raptures, but not necessarily on the basis of bad exegesis\*\*. Some of them caught glimpses of the two resurrections of the church and assumed there must be two raptures. Apparently God did not allow them to see the whole truth, which is one rapture for all of the body of Christ, and two resurrections divided by one thousand years.

Now, let’s look at the furthest trump to be sounded. Keep in mind that it is not the last trumpet in the Bible, but the last trumpet in time. As a matter of fact, the blowing of this trumpet is not even in the New Testament, but rather the Old Testament. It sits in the middle of [Psalm 47](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+47&t=NKJV), which gives a prophetic view of the coming millennium. This is the Psalm of great joy and celebration; the Psalm that predicts the rule of Christ over this earth; the Psalm that reveals the inheritance of Jacob (Israel); the Psalm that prophesies of the future subduing of all people and nations, and the placing of them under the feet of Israel. A time in which Israel will be made head of the nations, instead of the tail; a time of great joy and worship of the Great King of the earth (the Lord Jesus Christ). Then, in verse 5, we read about the last trump. “…*God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet*” ([Psalm 47:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+47.5&t=NKJV)).

Here is the antithesis of the rapture of the church. Whereas, at the rapture of the church, the Lord descends with a shout and the trump of God to raise the dead and translate the living of all believers from the earthly grave. So will He ascend (go up) with a shout and the sound of a trumpet to raise the dead and translate the living from the heavenly grave. When will the last trump sound? At the close of the millennium. Some may have a problem with this answer when they read [Psalm 47](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+47&t=NKJV). For the psalmist seems to place the trump in the middle of the millennium, since it is recorded in verse 5. But, this problem will soon disappear when it is understood that nothing in this Psalm indicates a chronological order of events — just a record. The exact time, however, is set in our [*1 Corinthians 15*](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+15&t=NKJV) text. It will be at this time that “…death will be swallowed up in victory” ([1 Corinthians 15:54b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+15.54b&t=NKJV)). And when will that be? At the close of the millennium, when Christ will have placed all enemies under His feet, death being the last one. Let us look at this scripture again:

“...for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal {must} put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory” ([1 Corinthians 15:52-54](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+15.52-54&t=NKJV) [52b]).

Our Lord helps us to understand this verse even further by using this same phrase in [Isaiah 25:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+25.8&t=NKJV). Here He also declares, “...death is swallowed up in victory” and then adds the words “...the Lord God will wipe away all tears from off all faces.” Now even though our Lord here is speaking of the resurrection of Israel at the beginning of the millennium, nevertheless, He wants us to compare this resurrection with the second resurrection of the church age ([1 Corinthians 2:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.13&t=NKJV)). Why? To further help establish the time for this second resurrection. This comparison shows us the exact same words used in [Isaiah 25:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+25.8&t=NKJV) as those of [1 Corinthians 15:54b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+15.54b&t=NKJV), except for the addition of “all tears being wiped away.” However, when we study the end-time events ([Revelation 21:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.4&t=NKJV)), we discover that God will also wipe away the tears of all of His saints there. For that which He will do at the beginning of the millennium, so He will also do at the beginning of the new heavens and new earth (eternal ages). For as there will be no more death for the raised ones of Israel, so here there will be no more death for all of the saints.

Under the third order of the resurrections in our previous First Corinthian text, the Apostle Paul gives us one more piece of evidence as to when all of this will be.

"….Then {cometh} the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father.” ([1 Corinthians 15:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+15.24&t=NKJV))

At the end of the millennium, when all things have been subdued and placed under the feet of Christ, then He will deliver up the kingdom to God the Father. This will be at the entrance into the eternal ages; when death is destroyed; when His saints are raised from the heavenly grave; when all tears are wiped away; when the new heavens and earth are established. This is when the kingdom of heaven will become the “kingdom of the Father.”

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[Bible One - Gary Whipple's Beyond the Rapture](http://www.bibleone.net/BeyondtheRapture.pdf), Chapter 13

Gary's books can be purchased at [Gary Whipple's Books - Schoettle Publishing](http://www.schoettlepublishing.com/catalog/whipple.htm).

\*\*See [Faith, Analogy of](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-three.php#Faith,%20Analogy%20of) in this site.

Also see [Rapture Part I](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-one.php#Rapture%20Part%20I), [Rapture Part II](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-one.php#Rapture%20Part%20II), [Rapture Part III](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-one.php#Rapture%20Part%20III) and [The Rapture (Not) in 2 Thessalonians 2:3](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-three.php#The%20Rapture%20(Not)%20in%202%20Thessalonians%202:3) in this site.

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(**Note** Arlen Chitwood's opposite interpretation of [1 Corinthians 15:52](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+15.52&t=NKJV) in [Rapture Part III](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-one.php#Rapture%20Part%20III) under The Complete Church in this site:

The trumpet beckoning to John in [Revelation 4:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4.1&t=NKJV) can only be synonymous with the trumpet in [Revelation 1:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1.10&t=NKJV). Chapter four drops back and begins at the same place as previously seen in chapter one — with the removal of the Church to be judged.

In this respect — because of the revealed events which follow in each instance — the trumpet in these two sections can only be the trumpet which will be heard when the Church is removed from the earth at the end of this dispensation, subsequently appearing in the presence of Christ to be judged, as revealed in chapters one through three (cf. [1 Corinthians 15:52](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+15.52&t=NKJV); [1 Thessalonians 4:16-5:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+4.16-5.9&t=NKJV)). Then, sequences of events, revealed throughout the remainder of the book, begin to unfold.)