

Biblical Notes — 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

16-17 – For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. [17] Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. (16. ὅτι αὐτὸς ὁ κύριος ἐν κελεύσματι, ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου καὶ ἐν σάλπιγγι θεοῦ καταβήσεται ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστήσονται πρῶτον, 17. ἔπειτα ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι ἅμα σὺν αὐτοῖς ἁρπαγησόμεθα ἐν νεφέλαις εἰς ἀπάντησιν τοῦ κυρίου εἰς ἄερα· καὶ οὕτως πάντοτε σὺν κυρίῳ ἔσόμεθα)

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“ἁρπαγησόμεθα” = harpagēsometha

◀ 726. harpazó ▶

Strong's Concordance

harpazó: to seize, catch up, snatch away

Original Word: ἁρπάζω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: harpazó

Phonetic Spelling: (har-pad'-zo)

Short Definition: I seize, snatch, obtain by robbery

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“The word *rapture* is simply the anglicized form of the Greek word ἁρπαζω (harpazō) that appears in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 in the original text.

To begin with, the English word *rapture* is derived from the Latin participle *raptus* from the verb *rapio*. And Latin *rapio* and Greek ἁρπαζω (harpazō) are cognates — they are the same word. Don’t be fooled by the superficial differences between Latin *rapio* and Greek *harpazō*. The -αζω (-azō) on the end of ἁρπαζω (harpazō) is not part of the shared stem but a common verb ending. And the rough breather, the “h”, at the beginning, is not part of the shared stem either. The shared stem is simply “rap” — rap in Latin and ρ-π (r-p) in Greek.

The fact is, *harpazō* and *rapio* belong to a class of Greek and Latin cognates where Greek adds an “h” to the shared stem. Another example from this class is Greek ἱστημι (histēmi) and Latin *sto*. Here again, neither the “h” at the beginning nor the -μι (-mi) verb ending are part of the shared stem. The stem is *stē* in Greek and *sto* in Latin. And it is *sta* in English, from whence we get words like *stand* and *standard*.

So we see that English *rapture*, Latin *rapio*, and Greek *harpazō* are cognates — they are the same word in different languages.”

—— Lee W. Brainard, *The Word Rapture Does Appear in the Bible*, September 13, 2017.

“Though the word ‘rapture’ does not occur in our English translations of the Bible, it is derived from the [Latin] Vulgate rendering of the verb ‘caught up’ (harpagesometha) in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, *rapiemur*.”

—— A. Hoekema, *Bible and the Future*, 164n3.

“Is that coming for those in Christ described in 1 Thessalonians 4 an imminent coming? The answer to that question is yes and is based on several indicators. One is the writer’s use of the first person plural in 4:15, 17: “we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord ... we who are alive and remain” (*italics added*). Paul was personally looking forward to the Lord’s return.”

—— Robert L. Thomas, The Rapture and the Biblical Teaching of Imminency, in Evidence for the Rapture: A Biblical Case for Pretribulationism. EPub ed., (Moody Publishers, 2015), 31