THE WORD MEET

I found something interesting in the CLNT Keyword Concordance Page 193. I will get to that shortly, but first this. I have been asked several times why I don’t believe in the rapture, or as the CLNT has is “the snatching away.” My answer is always the same: “because it isn’t a scriptural teaching, at least not in the way most of Christianity teaches it.”

Many, who believe in the rapture believe, just before the tribulation begins God will call His church up to heaven, and by church they mean all who make a true confession that Jesus Christ is their Saviour. Some believe that only their group will be raptured, those who believe a certain message from the scripture. They also believe that many will be excluded, and in that exclusion are the OT believers, and the apostles, excluding Paul.

The anchor verses that are used, to prove this belief, can be found in chapter four of Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians:

“Now we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are reposing, lest you may sorrow according as the rest, also, who have no expectation.  
14 For, if we are believing that Jesus died and rose, thus also, those who are put to repose, will God, through Jesus, lead forth together with Him.  
15 For this we are saying to you by the word of the Lord, that we, the living, who are surviving to the presence of the Lord, should by no means outstrip those who are put to repose,  
16 for the Lord Himself will be descending from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the Chief Messenger, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall be rising first.  
17 Thereupon we, the living who are surviving, shall at the same time be snatched away together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And thus shall we always be together with the Lord.  
18 So that, console one another with these words.”

(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

The word that is paramount in understanding this portion of scripture is “meet.” To understand the meaning of this word we only have to look at the other three places in the NT where this word “meet” is used (see CLNT Keyword Concordance page 193).

The first place it is found is in Matthew 25:1 & 6. We all know the account of the ten virgins waiting for the bridegroom. Five are said to be prudent (wise A.V), and five stupid (foolish A.V). At the arrival of the bridegroom, the five stupid virgins have no oil for their lamps, and are told to go to the market and buy some. The five prudent (or wise) virgins go out and meet the bridegroom:

"Then likened shall be the kingdom of the heavens to ten virgins, who getting their torches, came out to meet the bridegroom. (vs.1)

"Now in the middle of the night a clamor occurs: 'Lo! the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'” (vs.6)

After they meet him they go back to the place from where they came from:

10 “Now, at their coming away to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who are ready entered with him into the wedding festivities, and the door is locked. 11 "Now subsequently the rest of the virgins also are coming, saying 'Lord! Lord! Open to us!'

Where do these stupid virgins go after they buy their oil? They go to the place of the wedding festival, where they too were waiting for the bridegroom, and knock on the door, which is now locked. They didn’t go off to some other place to seek him out, they went back to where the prudent virgins, who went out to meet the bridegroom, and escort him back to the wedding festival were and we read now are.

The next place this word “meet” can be found is in John 12:13:

“On the morrow the vast throng, who are coming for the festival, hearing that Jesus is coming into Jerusalem, 13 got fronds of palms and came out to meet Him.”

When the people hear that Jesus is coming to Jerusalem they come out of Jerusalem to meet the Lord and escort Him back into Jerusalem, laying palm branches on the ground in front of Him. They don’t go out to meet Him, and then follow Him to another location, they come back to where they left from, Jerusalem.

The next time this word “meet” is used is in Acts 28:15, when the believers come out from the city Rome to meet Paul and escort him into the city:

“And thence the brethren, hearing about us, come to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Taverns, perceiving whom, Paul, thanking God, took courage.16 Now when we entered Rome, Paul was permitted to remain by himself together with the soldier who guarded him.”

Once again, these believers do not go out to meet Paul, and then take him and themselves to another location, or back to where Paul first started his journey from, they escort him back into the city they came from, Rome, the place where Paul was going to.

The last instance where this word “meet” is used is in the portion of scripture at the beginning of this short article, from 1 Thessalonians, where we are told the believers “meet” the Lord in the air. I think by now you get the gist of the meaning of this word “meet” that is used in just these four portions of scripture in the New Testament.

The word “meet” in these four (and only four) portions of scripture is *apantesis,* and its meaning is “to meet and return with”: (an escort).

So, do I believe in the rapture, or snatching away? Yes I do. I believe the scriptures are very clear that when Christ returns, He will call (trumpet) for His ecclesia (called out ones), and the dead will rise, and we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them, to “meet” our Lord in the air, and we will then escort Him back to the place we came from, the place where He is coming to, planet Earth.

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