

Don Hargrove
Faith Bible Church
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Personal Study through the Bible-17 (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

After discussing the three theological-spiritual virtues of faith, hope, and love in the first section of Thessalonians along with the crucial need for progressive sanctification away from the kosmos, Paul moves to eschatology, future events. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 again. Note that Paul deals with the time frame of the rapture in relation to the resurrection of the dead in Christ. He states plainly that the translation of the living will not precede the resurrection of the dead: “For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep” (NASB). The fact that this revelation is introduced by the unusual phrase “by the word of the Lord,” points to special revelation given to Paul.

Paul gives us three events around the rapture. First, the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout. This involves the descent of the Lord from the third heaven. Upon His arrival, the “Lord gives a shout.” This term has the meaning of a military command in reference to the resurrection of the dead and the translation of the living saints.

Read John 11:43 where Christ cried out with a loud voice and how Lazarus come forth still bound in grave clothes.

Read John 5:25 where Christ predicted that the “hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. This apparently refers to those who are spiritually dead but still alive physically who shall hear the voice of the Son of God and receive eternal life.

Read John 5:28, 29 where Christ says that the hour is coming in which all those who are in the grave shall hear his voice, and shall go forth—some to the resurrection of life and other to the resurrection of damnation. I Thess. 4:16 is the partial fulfillment of this resurrection of life.

The second event accompanies the shout of the command of the Lord, namely the voice of the archangel, who is called Michael. Read Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7. Michael has the honor of being head of the holy angels, the leader of the angels who did not follow Satan. For the angelic struggle due to the angelic conflict, read Ephesians 6:11-18, and Revelation 12:7. Michael is not only the leader of the unfallen angels, he is also the angel in charge of the protection of Israel, read Daniel 12:1.

The voice of the archangel in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 is the shout of triumph. He shall rejoice at the great demonstration of God’s grace and power at the rapture. In spite of all of Satan’s efforts in attempting to corrupt and finally destroy the church, here at last the church is resurrected, perfected, and completed—all because of God’s matchless, marvelous grace. It is only fitting that the voice of the command of the Lord is accompanied by this archangel’s voice

of triumph. It is possible that you and I will hear those two voices before we die. Are you ready?
What are the effects of looking forward to the Rapture? read 1 John 3:2, 3.

In 'Ehyeh,

Pastor Don Hargrove