

09-05-10

Series: The Resurrections

The Resurrections (21)

What Happens to Christians Who Die?

[\(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18\)](#)

Pastor Eddie Ildefonso

[Matthew 28:1-10](#)

(Continuation from 08-29-10)

The Doctrine of the Resurrections

[\(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18\)](#)

The Thessalonians' *ignorance about the Rapture* caused them to grieve. It was to give them hope and to comfort them that Paul discussed that momentous event, giving a fourfold description of it: **1) its pillars, 2) participants, 3) plan, and 4) profit.**

So far we have looked at: 1) The Pillars of the Rapture: 1. The Death of Christ, **2.** The Resurrection of Christ, and **3.** The Revelation of Christ. **2) The Participants of the Rapture.** Now let us look at **3) The Plan of the rapture.**

3) The Plan of the Rapture

[1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁶ **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.**

Having reassured the Thessalonians that their departed loved ones will not miss out on the **Rapture**, Paul gave a step-by-step description of that event.

[1 Thessalonians 4:16a \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁶ **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.**

First, the Lord Himself will return for His church. He will not send angels for it, in contrast to the gathering of the elect that takes place at **the Second Coming** ([Mark 13:26-27](#)).

[Mark 13:26-27 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁶ **Then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN CLOUDS with great power and glory.**

²⁷ **And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of heaven.**

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1 Thessalonians 4:16b (NASB)

¹⁶ 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.

Second, Jesus will descend from heaven, where He has been since His ascension ([Acts 1:9-11](#)).

Acts 1:9-11 (NASB)

⁹ And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

¹⁰ And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them.

¹¹ They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."

Earlier in this epistle, Paul commended the Thessalonians because they were waiting,

1 Thessalonians 1:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.

At his trial before the Sanhedrin, Stephen cried out,

Acts 7:56 (NASB)

⁵⁶ and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

The writer of Hebrews said of Christ,

Hebrews 1:3 (NASB)

³ And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

1 Thessalonians 4:16c (NASB)

¹⁶ 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.

Third, when Jesus comes down from heaven, He will do so with a shout. *Keleusma* (**command**) has a military ring to it, as if the Commander is calling His troops to fall in. The dead saints in their resurrected bodies will join the raptured living believers in the ranks.

The Lord's shout of command will be similar to His raising of Lazarus, when

John 11:43 (NASB)

⁴³ When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth."

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This is the hour,

John 5:25 (NASB)

²⁵ Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

The righteous dead of the church age will be the first to rise—a truth that must have greatly comforted the anxious Thessalonians.

1 Thessalonians 4:16d (NASB)

¹⁶ 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.

Fourth, the voice of the archangel will sound. There is no definite article in the Greek text, which literally reads, “**an archangel.**” In **Jude 9**, the only other passage in Scripture that mentions an archangel, the archangel is Michael.

Jude 1:9 (NASB)

⁹ But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”

Scripture does not say whether or not he is the only archangel (there were seven archangels according to Jewish tradition). Thus, it is impossible to say who the archangel whose voice will be heard at that Rapture is. Whoever he is, he adds his voice to the Lord’s shout of command.

1 Thessalonians 4:16e (NASB)

¹⁶ 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.