

# Abounding Grace Christian Church

## The Second Coming Letters of Paul – Part 10

### First Thessalonians

#### I. Exposition of Chapter Four (Continued).

A. **Verses 14-15** - “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 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 by no means precede those who are asleep.”

1. “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again...” – The fact that Jesus Christ rose from the dead is one of the most important doctrines of the Christian faith. The two enemies of humanity are sin and death which were brought into the world by Adam giving in to Satan’s temptation (**Genesis 3:1-7; Romans 5:12**). On the cross, Jesus defeated sin by taking the punishment and judgment for humanity’s sin upon Himself (**Romans 6:6-7; II Corinthians 5:14-21; Hebrews 9:24-28; I Peter 3:18; Revelation 1:5**). In His resurrection, Jesus conquered over death (**I Corinthians 15:20-23; II Timothy 1:10; Revelation 1:18**). The Scripture states: “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.” – **Romans 8:2**

2. More about Jesus’ Resurrection:

a. The Resurrection vindicated all the claims Jesus made of Himself.

b. The Resurrection signified Jesus’ complete success!

c. God raised Him up for our Justification. **Romans 4:25**.

d. God raised Him from the dead to be the saving life of all who believe.

**Romans 5:8-10**.

e. God raised Him from the dead to be the Head of the Church. **Ephesians 1:19-23**

f. God raised Him to be the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit. **John 1:33; Acts 2:32-33**.

g. God raised Him to be our Great High Priest. **I Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 8:1-4**.

h. God raised Him to be our Advocate. **I John 2:1-2**.

i. God raised Him to be the dispenser of gifts to men for the church. **Ephesians 4:8-16**.

j. God raised Him as the guarantee of all coming resurrections. **Romans 8:11; John**

**5:28,29; I Corinthians 15:20-23. Christ’s Resurrection Triumphed over the power of death!!**

3. “...God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 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 by no means precede those who are asleep.”

a. First, we notice that there will be believers who will still be alive and remaining on earth when the Lord comes again. We don’t know what generation that will be, but it could be ours!!

b. Second, Paul is reassuring the Thessalonian believers that those who have died prior to Christ’s second coming are going to come back with Him. In other words, their spirit and soul (inner man) which is now in heaven, in God’s presence, will come with Jesus.

c. Note the phrase; “For this we say to you by the word of the Lord...” – Regarding this, The Complete Biblical Library states:

“Paul had a clear word from the Lord about this. Of course, all he wrote in his epistles was by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. But in this case Paul also had a definite saying of Jesus. Jesus himself, in giving Paul the gospel, made it clear that those who are alive and remain till the coming of the Lord will not precede, get ahead of, or have any advantage over those who died with their faith in Jesus.”<sup>1</sup>

B. **Verses 16-18** – “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

1. **Verse 16** – The Lord is going to “...descend from heaven...” – The Scripture makes it clear that after Jesus raised from the dead, He first was seen by His disciples during forty days where He taught them things pertaining to the Kingdom of God (**Acts 1:1-3**), then He ascended into Heaven and sat at the right hand of the Father (**Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33; Acts 5:31; Acts 7:55; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3, 13; Hebrews 8:1; Hebrews 10:12; Hebrews 12:2; I Peter 3:22**.)

<sup>1</sup>The Complete Biblical Library: Acts – Revelation, Volume 2, (Empowered Life, Tulsa, OK, 2016.), 852.

2. Jesus is going to come **“...from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God.”** (NOTE: Another primary New Testament passage for this is I Corinthians 15:50-58).

a. The word **“shout”** means; the voicing of a command... In a number of languages the expression ‘**the word of command’** may be rendered as ‘**when the command is given’** or ‘**when the command is shouted.**’<sup>2</sup>

b. **“...with the voice of an archangel...”** – An **“archangel”** refers to: **“a chief or highly important Angel.”**<sup>3</sup> Many believe that Michael, which is the only angel specifically mentioned in the Bible as an archangel, is the angel referred to here (See **Jude 9; Daniel 10:13,21; 12:1; Revelation 12:7**).

c. **“...with the trumpet of God.”** – Concerning this, Dr. Craig Keener writes:

**“In the Old Testament, trumpets (shofars, rams’ horns) were used especially to gather the assembly or give orders for battle; in this context, both connotations may be in view. Roman armies also used trumpets in war; Jewish views of the end time included Israel being gathered with a trumpet and trumpets used in the final war at the same time.”**<sup>4</sup>

d. Dr. Thomas Constable writes concerning these three sounds from Heaven:

**“Who will voice the loud shout? Will it be Jesus Himself (cf. John 11:43), or the archangel Michael (Dan. 10:13; Jude 9), or another angel? Is this a literal trumpet call, or was Paul speaking figuratively in describing the call of God by which He will announce the Advent of His Son? (cf. 1 Cor. 15:52) These three phenomena may all refer to the same thing, but probably they are three separate almost simultaneous announcements heralding Christ’s return. Though one’s curiosity about these aspects of the Rapture is not fully satisfied in this passage, one thing is clear: Christ’s return for His saints will be announced from heaven forcefully and dramatically.”**<sup>5</sup>

3. **“And the dead in Christ will rise first.”** – This is, obviously, referring to believers who died physically before the second coming. We already saw that they come back with Him and this indicates that they take up their bodies once again which are then resurrected. This is called the **“first resurrection”** (Revelation 20:5-6).

4. **Verse 17 – “Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”** – The Christians who are still physically alive when Jesus descends from Heaven, are going to be **“caught up together”** with the **“dead in Christ”** who are resurrected. All of us will then meet the Lord in the air. The words, **“caught up”** are one Greek word which means: **“to grab or seize by force, with the purpose of removing and/or controlling—‘to seize, to snatch away, to take away.’”**<sup>6</sup> This is where we get the idea of the **“rapture of the church.”**

5. **Verse 18 – “Therefore comfort one another with these words.”** – These truths concerning the resurrection of the dead and the fact that we’re going to be changed and forever be with the Lord, should bring great comfort to all of us. This present life cannot be compared to the everlasting life we’re going to experience.

### C. What will our Resurrected Bodies be Like?

1. Our bodies will be like Jesus’ glorified body. **Philippians 3:20-21.**

2. Our bodies will be a real body of flesh and bone. **Luke 24:39.**

3. Our bodies will be incorruptible bodies. **I Corinthians 15:42, 53-54.**

4. Our bodies will be immortal bodies. **I Corinthians 15:53; II Corinthians 5:1-8.**

5. Our bodies will not be subject to material limitations. **John 20:19-28.**

6. Our bodies will possibly be able to enjoy food. **John 21:1-14.**

<sup>2</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 424.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 144.

<sup>4</sup>Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 593.

<sup>5</sup>Thomas L. Constable, “1 Thessalonians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 704.

<sup>6</sup>Louw and Nida, 220.