

His Return: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Introduction: It seems as though there was some misunderstanding among the saints in Thessalonica. Perhaps, like in [2 Thessalonians 2:2](#), someone was spreading false information regarding Christ's return. Paul is setting the record straight concerning Jesus' return and the fate of the faithful who were both alive and deceased. We'll combine this with [2 Thessalonians 1:5-12](#).

Vs. 13-18: His Return

- Finding Comfort (13-15):

- Beloved, He's coming back. His return has lovely, powerful, and terrifying implications depending on your status with the Lord, but we need to hear this first: He's coming back. We have before us a message of encouragement.
- His coming back isn't only for those fortunate to be around. The brethren in Thessalonica wondered about those who had fallen asleep (died). The faithful who were no longer with them. We need to hear the same message. Don't fret over them. Hurt over the absence of their presence because of your love for them, but don't fret over them. They're okay. They're in the only hands you want over them - the Lord. They are not overlooked. They are not forgotten. The sheep are still known by name and will be honored. In fact, they will experience the power and grace of God before those who are left.
- [Hebrews 9:27-28](#) And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him.
- [2 Corinthians 4:13-14](#) Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.

- Revealed from Heaven (16):

- *Cry of Command*
 - [Joel 2:11](#) The Lord utters His voice before His army, for His camp is exceedingly great; He who executes His word is powerful. For the day of the Lord is great and very awesome; who can endure it?
 - [John 5:28-29](#) "Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment." Perhaps, the cry of command is like that of Jesus' words to Lazarus: "Lazarus, come out." Also, take note of 6:39, 40, 44, & 54. It's on the "last day." This doesn't take place 1,000 years before a second resurrection for the wicked. It all happens simultaneously.
- *Voice of an Archangel*
 - [Jude 9](#) But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you."
- *Sound of the Trumpet*
 - [Joel 2:1](#) Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming; it is near,

- **Exodus 19:16, 19** On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled . . . And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder.
- **1 Corinthians 15:42-57** This will help round out this portion. All will be changed in the twinkling of an eye.
- **Caught up for a Meeting (17-18)**
 - Caught up is to *"snatch, or take away - a. forcefully . . . b. In such a way that no resistance is offered."* This is where the "rapture" comes into play, yet it is never mentioned in the Bible. It takes the principle and ties it into misinterpretations from Revelation. It's the idea of the righteous being taken away by Christ and then, a different event separated by time, Christ's second return to establish His Kingdom.
 - Meet. The Greek term was often used to describe the escorting of dignitaries by the citizens into the city. However, when we harmonize all passages and consider the direct context, it begins from heaven's point of view when Jesus brings the citizens to the Father. Jesus goes to them, they meet Him, and He brings them home.
 - **Acts 1:9-11** And when He had said these things, as they were looking on, He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as He went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven."

2 Thessalonians 1:5-10: Simplicity of Christianity

- **His Vengeance (5-10):**
 - **Matthew 16:27** For the Son of Man is going to come with His angels in the glory of His Father, and then He will repay each person according to what he has done.
 - The fire makes you think of Mount Sinai again.
 - **Matthew 13:39-43** The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.
- **The End (2 Peter 3:5-13):**
 - Here is a terrifying passage for the wicked, and it's supposed to be. The wrath of God will consume creation. The first time Jesus came to us was to deal with sin and save humanity. The second coming is to bring His own home while executing judgment. All things have come to an end. There is no more story to tell in this realm. We are moving on to eternity.

As I meditated on the passages I've read many times before, different emotions would come and go and the weight of the passages pressed against my heart. This is so serious. It's so final. The rebellious and foolish can laugh and smirk today. You can talk big when the Creator is absent, but one day He will return, and where will His mockers be? Do you think laughter will be heard? It's turned into weeping and gnashing of teeth.

However, there was another principle that, yet again, moved my heart towards Christ. I thought about Jesus' time in the garden. Do you remember when he told Peter to put his sword away and said, "Do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once send Me more than twelve legions of angels?" No, though an angel came to strengthen Him, He did not take advantage of His position. But He will bring His angels with Him the next time to protect and deliver us all.