

W @ K L J P r a J @ r J O U r n a l

DAILY BIBLE STUDIES

“How Will Jesus Christ Return?”

1 Thessalonians 4:16 -18

JULY 6 – JULY 12, 2008

THE LORD'S DAY –Our study for this week brings us back to **1 Thessalonians 4** as we will finish out this chapter by looking at **verses 16-18**. We have spent several weeks now dealing with matters concerning the return of Jesus Christ (such as timing, events, manner, etc...). I have mentioned before that there are differing views among true believers over some of these issues. In studying things where there are differing human opinions, always remember that God’s Word is sure, true fact and God is not confused over what will happen. Any confusion is confined to us, to the minds of finite, limited, sinful men. Rest assured that God’s Word and decree does not change and will perfectly come to pass. My desire is not to merely share with you “my opinion” of any given text and be argumentative or arrogant; but rather to study with you what The Scripture actually says concerning the return of Christ so we as God’s people will be prepared. Read **Isaiah 46:10, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18**.

What truth(s) did I learn from God’s Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: Ask God to teach you from His Word this week.

MONDAY –In **verse 16** of our text we find The Apostle Paul gets right to the point in explaining “how” the return of Jesus Christ will take place and what exactly it will look like. In this verse we are given a list of things said to take place. The first of these is that “*The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout...*” It is said that The Lord will “*descend...*”, and today we will look exclusively at Christ’s “descent”. In the Greek, the word translated “*descend*” is katabaino “to go down, come down, descend”. This word is used in Scripture to describe the descending of The Holy Spirit upon Jesus at His baptism, rain descending to the earth in a storm, Christ’s sweat falling to the earth as great drops of blood as He prayed in Gethsemane, the mocking of those who told Jesus to “come down” from the cross, as well as the first advent of our Lord when He “came down” from heaven. We understand that Christ will “*come down*” from heaven at His Second coming. Some see Christ stopping “*in the air*” when He gathers His Elect while some see Christ continuing in His descent all the way to earth with His Elect after gathering them. I think we need go no further than **Acts 1** to see and understand “how” Jesus will “*descend*” to this earth. Notice His starting point in His ascension and where He ends up. Read **Acts 1: 9-11**.

What truth(s) did I learn from God’s Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: Jesus, thank You for both Your 1st and 2nd “descent”.

Praise & Prayer	ADORATION Hallowed be Your name. (6:9)	AUTHORITY Your Kingdom come... (6:10)	APPEAL Give us this day... (6:11)	AQUITTAL Forgive us our debts... (6:12)	ASSISTANCE Deliver us from evil. (6:13a)	ADMIRATION For Yours is the Kingdom... (6:13)	Lord's Day	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat

M a t t h @ W 6: 9-13

TUESDAY –To finish yesterday's thought concerning the descent of our Lord Jesus at His coming some would argue that our current text does not explicitly say that Jesus comes "to the earth". This is true. It seems a bit strange however that in the fullest description of the "rapture" there is also no mention of a change of direction back to heaven either. There is not one account in the NT where the specific phrase "to the earth" is used. But it is without doubt and all would agree that the three accounts in the Olivet Discourse (**Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21**), **2 Thessalonians 1:7-10**, and **Revelation 19:11-16** portray a posttribulational descent of Christ to the earth. These passages as well as our current text share the implication that He will appear, gather His saints meeting them in the air, and they having joined Him will descend with Him all the way down to the earth. I would also draw your attention to The Lord's own teaching on His return found in **Matthew 25:1-13**. Here in this parable Jesus speaks of the groom coming to His wedding and gathering the 10 virgins who were prepared and had "went out" to meet Him. He brings them to the wedding and the door is shut. Notice how the foolish virgins who were not prepared for His coming are quite aware that they have been left out of the wedding and then they come and beat on the door only to be told what Jesus has mentioned before (**Matthew 7:23, 25:41**) "I do not know you". These words obviously take place at the judgment seat which takes place at Christ's return. Read this teaching from The Apostle Paul in **2 Timothy 4:1, 8**.

What truth(s) did I learn from God's Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: *Father, thank You that Christ has taken our judgment as believers upon Himself at the cross. We long for Your appearing Jesus!*

WEDNESDAY –Our text says that when Christ descends, there will be a "shout", "voice", and "trumpet". I do not want to be sarcastic but this event does not seem like one that could be missed such as a "secret" catching away (rapture) of the saved. "Shout" is the Greek word *keleuma* used only this once in Scripture. It's full definition is as follows: "an order, command, spec. a stimulating cry, either that by which animals are roused and urged on by man, as horses by charioteers, hounds by hunters, etc., or that by which a signal is given to men, e.g. to rowers by the master of a ship, to soldiers by a commander (with a loud summons, a trumpet call)". This shout of command will signal the return of Jesus. We see parallels in the command given to Lazarus to "come forth" as well as to Jesus speaking of the dead hearing His voice and coming forth from **John 5:28-29**. Most scholars and commentators would connect the "voice of an archangel" with Michael, the only Archangel mentioned in Scripture (**Jude 9**). We find Michael also in **Daniel 12:1-3** in a passage that deals with resurrection and is obviously a resurrection that takes place after "a time of trouble" (tribulation). This would indicate the "rapture" and translation of the saints follows the tribulation. Added to these two things will be "the trumpet of God". We have seen previously the emphasis of the publicity of the return of Christ with the sound of a "great trumpet" from **Matthew 24:30-31**, again coinciding with the gathering of the elect and the return to earth of Christ when "all the tribes of the earth will mourn...and see the Son of Man coming..."

What truth(s) did I learn from God's Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: *Father, thank You that one day all men will see and bow before our glorious Savior King Jesus. Help me to obey Him now in my living.*

THURSDAY –In the end of **verse 16** and in **verse 17** Paul again answers the apparent question of these Thessalonians. They seemed to understand that Christ would return but where concerned about what would happen to those who had already died before Jesus came back. Paul relieves any fears by saying that those who were asleep in Jesus would rise first and then those who are living would be "...caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." Paul then abruptly breaks off his description with the statement, "And thus we shall always be with the Lord." He does not say we will go back to heaven or simply hover there. Quite simply he assures them that we shall from then on be in the presence of Christ forever. Either in death or at the return of Christ those of us in Him have the promise of Christ's presence. Read **2 Corinthians 5:8**.

What truth(s) did I learn from God's Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: *God, thanks for the promise of eternal union with Jesus.*

FRIDAY –In the phrase, "...caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" we see something interesting. The word translated "meet" is the Greek *apantesis* which means "to meet one". It is used 4 times in The Scripture; twice it is used in the parable we saw earlier in **Matthew 25** where the virgins met the bridegroom. It is also used in **Acts 28:15-16** where some brothers came out to "meet" Paul and Luke as they were traveling to Rome and they then accompanied them as they entered the city. It is finally used here in our text to refer to our meeting as believers with Christ at His return. In the times (context) of the writing of the Scripture we find this word used to describe a going out to meet an important person and then come back with him to the place to which he was heading. As F.F. Bruce comments in his commentary, "When a dignitary paid an official visit or *parousia* to a city in Hellenistic times, the action of the leading citizens in going out to meet him and escorting him on the final stage of his journey was called the *apantesis*..." (Greek "meet") Although this is no guarantee of our rising to "meet" Christ and accompany Him back to earth as King it does favor the posttribulational concept of the purpose and manner of the "rapture" while it gives the pre-trib view another obstacle. Read **1 Corinthians 15:50-58**.

What truth(s) did I learn from God's Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: *Jesus, You are coming again and we will meet You!*

SATURDAY –Remember beloved, regardless of your "view" concerning the timing of His coming, Jesus will return and we'll be with Him forever. So take comfort and be prepared for His return. Read **1 Thessalonians 5:18**

What truth(s) did I learn from God's Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: *Thank God for the sure hope & comfort of Christ's return!*