

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

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Are You Ready for the Rapture? (Part 8)

I Thessalonians 4:13-18

Last month we finished with a few thoughts about Michael the archangel's part in the rapture. I Thessalonians 4:16 says that the voice of the archangel will be heard during the rapture. That is the entirety of the information as stated in I Thessalonians. If we desire to have a better understanding of what that involves, we will have to compare the other verses where Michael is mentioned.

I will not write out the verses as I did last month, but I will give the references and a summary of what is said. Jude 9 calls him Michael the archangel, the only other time that the word archangel occurs in Scripture. Michael is mentioned three times in Daniel—10:13, 10:21, and 12:1. The final time is Revelation 12:7-8. Two things can be stated about Michael—he is a fighter and he is closely related to Israel. Three passages clearly refer to his fighting—Daniel 10:13, Jude 9, and Revelation 12:7-8. In the other two passages, Daniel 10:21 and 12:1, Michael is closely associated with the nation of Israel. Daniel 10:21 calls him “*Michael your prince.*” Michael is not Daniel's prince because the pronoun is plural—“*your.*” The word your is referring to the nation of Israel. Daniel 12:1 is even more detailed. The first part of the verse says, “*And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people.*” These passages in Daniel, I Thessalonians, Jude, and Revelation are the only six passages where you will find any mention of Michael the archangel. Because three of them refer to his fighting and two of them refer to his relationship with Israel, I Thessalonians must refer to fighting or some connection with Israel. I do not see him fighting at the moment of the rapture, but his voice is heard, so it must be in relation to Israel. What does

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he say?

I can only speculate because the Bible does not specifically say, but I believe it will be something like this—“Israel is now God's focus again.” It may be something connected with the Tribulation period because that is what Daniel 12:1 says. The verse begins with Michael's connection with Israel and then states “*there shall be a time of trouble.*” That word trouble is also found in Jeremiah 30:7 where the Tribulation is described as “*the time of Jacob's trouble.*” The judgments of the Tribulation will involve the whole earth, but there is a special emphasis on Israel. As I noted earlier in the message when I was giving the evidence for a pre-tribulation rapture, God will focus on Israel again during the Tribulation. Whatever the particular words will be and how many will hear it, we do not know. But Michael's voice will be heard, and the church will be gone and the Tribulation will begin.

At the Rapture, there will be the sounds Of the Master, Of the Messenger, and *Of the Music*. I Thessalonians 4:16 says, “*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven...with the trump of God.*” I Corinthians 15:52 also mentions a trumpet at the rapture. It says, “*In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*” There have been many forms of beautiful music whether it came from a piano, violin, or some other string, brass, or woodwind instrument. But the trumpet that sounds at the rapture will be more glorious than any musical sound that we have ever heard.

But why does a trumpet sound? Would not the shout of Jesus himself be enough? Of course it would, but the Bible says that the trumpet will sound. I can never explain why; I am just going to rejoice in the reality of the trumpet blowing. Perhaps examining the usage of trumpets in Scripture will help us understand better.

Before we look at the usages of the trumpet, let me remind you

that most of the references in the Old Testament to a trumpet were referring to a ram's horn. Does that mean that the trumpet at the rapture is a ram's horn? I do not know. It could be, but I do not know that it has to be. It could be made of metal like our modern trumpets, or it could be something completely unknown to us. Again, the substance of which it is made does not really matter. What matters is that it is blown, and we will be with Jesus.

There are nine uses of a trumpet in Scripture: 1) To summon soldiers; 2) To warn the people in time of danger; 3) To announce the day of atonement; 4) To announce the year of jubilee; 5) To signal the bringing of the ark to Jerusalem; 6) To announce the crowning of a king; 7) To dedicate the temple; 8) To worship God; 9) To signal triumph. Of these nine uses, one could argue that Jesus is gathering his soldiers since we will come back to the earth with Him as an army at the end of the Tribulation. One might also mention the sound of the trumpet when a king is crowned. However, Jesus will not be ascending the throne at the time of the rapture. He will take His throne seven years later, but at that time another trumpet will sound (Matthew 24:30-31). I think the best reason a trumpet is blown at the rapture is usage 9—a trumpet is blown at a time of triumph. When the trumpet blows at the rapture, we are closer to Christ's complete triumph over sin and death. The victory was won through Christ's death and resurrection, but it has not been completely executed. When the rapture takes place, all of those who have died after Christ's resurrection will be resurrected. The living at that time will be caught up to be with Him. The trumpet signals Christ's triumph over death for all believers up to that time. Some will believe and die during the Tribulation, and they will be resurrected later. But at the Rapture, Christ is signaling triumph. The dead in Christ are raised. He has done what He said He would do. He is triumphant over sin and death!

The sounds are the first elements of the rapture. But notice also The Span of the rapture. How long will it take for the dead to be raised and the living to rise to be with Him? It will take less time for

it to happen than it will for me to explain it. But notice the language of I Corinthians 15:52—*“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”* I mentioned this verse earlier when I was mentioning the trumpet. Now focus on the first part of the verse. It says, *“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.”* Some have tried to determine exactly what a twinkling of an eye is and have measured the time it takes for an eye to twinkle. It is an amazingly short period. However, in trying to be precise, they may miss the meaning of the verse. The phrase refers to something that cannot be divided. I do not know if the “twinkle” can actually be measured or if it is supposed to be measured. Regardless of that, the reality is that the time for the believer to be resurrected, raised, and changed is instantaneous. As soon as Jesus shouts, Michael says what he says, and the trumpet sounds, the dead are resurrected and the living are caught up. It will not take long. One moment we are on the earth—the next moment we are with Christ. The rapture is very similar to salvation in that neither of them are a process. They are both immediate changes wrought by the magnificent power of Christ. One moment a person is a sinner. As soon as they trust in Christ, they are immediately saved. It does not take days, weeks, months, or years. They immediately pass from death unto life. Likewise, the change from a natural body to a supernatural body is instantaneous. We will not go into an intermediate state. One moment we are natural; the next moment we are supernatural. What a wonderful truth to ponder!

The third element of the rapture is The Splendor of the Rapture. We have mentioned this throughout the message as we have discussed various aspects of the rapture, so we will not discuss it in great detail. But the reality of what takes place at the rapture is too wonderful not to mention as a separate thought.

The first part of the rapture is the Resurrection of the Bodies of Dead Saints. The last part of I Thessalonians 4:16 says, *“And the*

dead in Christ shall rise first.” I Corinthians gives a little bit more detail. Notice I Corinthians 15:51-57—“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” When we placed our loved one in the ground, their body was aged, sick, and sometimes both. However, when they are raised that body will be changed. No longer will they have an old body. No longer will it be afflicted with cancer, heart disease, or some other terrible sickness that ended their life. They will be raised with an immortal body that will never grow old or sick. That is the wonderful result of salvation—a glorified body. We will continue with this truth next month.