

1Thessalonians 12-05-11a

This is Friday the 11th of May 2012. We're in the Book of First Thessalonians. We resume tonight in chapter 4, verse 16.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer and we'll begin. Father, we thank you for this opportunity to spend time together in fellowship in the study of your word, receiving the blessings that come through our association and the ministry of your spirit through the gifts that are distributed in our midst. We thank you for this passage.

We pray that as we meditate on it and seek to understand it more fully, that we will find those truths in it, both individually and collectively, that will enable us to see our calling and our purpose and our hope more clearly. And as a result, live more fully in that plan and purpose that is pleasing in your sight. We pray it in Jesus name.

Amen. If you join me in First Thessalonians chapter 4, you'll remember the preceding context. I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope or no dog.

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. This is where we pick up tonight for the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel and with the trump 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.

Very familiar passage. You think, well, pretty well got this figured out. We can glide through it in a pretty quick fashion.

I think we'll see some things tonight that you might not have seen coming. I didn't see them coming last week, but in my preparation this week, they came, they saw, they conquered, they captured my attention. And so we're going to look at them this evening.

But you'll notice in verse 16, for the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel and with the trump of God. So I asked myself this question, why three noises? Why doesn't it just say the Lord will descend, dead in Christ will rise, we who are alive and remain will join him. Why all the noise? Seems like a reasonable question, does it not? And if you keep your finger here and turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 15, we have some additional light shed on this specific event.

1 Corinthians chapter 15, the other extremely well-known passage in this regard. The passage in view here is in verse 51. Behold, I tell you a mystery.

We shall not all sleep, very same word that describes the dead in Christ in our passage. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet. Same word here, salpigi, S-A-L-P-I-G-I.

And interestingly, I looked this up, I thought, well, this is probably going to be a ram's horn trumpet, but in Greek there's a different word for the ram's horn trumpet. This is a metal trumpet. It's salpigs in its vocabulary form, which is S-A-L-P-I-G-X.

And in the same way, we had phono, phono, phono, phono, with a strange beginning. You've got salpigs with a strange ending, G-X, not that common, but it is a metal trumpet and it's pretty much a straight trumpet. They've got yet a different word for the coiled up type.

This is not so much a musical instrument as a signaling device used primarily in battle. It is used to communicate to the troops. So you might say bugle.

You don't typically have bugles as so much a beautiful music type of instrument as you do wake up the troops, sound charge, sound retreat. It's designed to be loud, not particularly sonorous or beautiful in its tone. That's what we have here.

So you get the idea if there's a trumpet that this is some sort of a signal and this is going to be a blast. By the way, when you see it say last trumpet in 1 Corinthians 15, you have here a metonymy, a figure of speech, because literally what would the last trumpet be? If I make 50 trumpets at the factory, the last one that rolls off the line would be the last trumpet, right? But we're talking about the trumpet sound. We're talking about the last trumpet blast.

And the word Salpiki in its various forms is used for the blast of the trumpet as well as for the trumpet itself. So just lest we fail to turn over every stone, just be aware that when it says last trumpet, it's talking about the sound. Now, will there ever be any other trumpets sounded? Well, yes, there's going to be a trumpet sound at the second coming.

So how can this be the last trumpet if there's going to be another trumpet later on? Well, this requires us to take a real quick look at the word last, the word translated last here in 1 Corinthians. We don't have it necessarily in our passage, but it is the same trumpet sound. So we need to cover this.

Why does Paul call it in Corinthians the last trump? The word is eschatos, you might recognize it, we get the word eschatology from this, which is literally the ology of last things, the logos of last things, the knowledge, the discussion, the doctrines of prophecy we call eschatology, last things, eschatos. We have another word, telos, but it has more the idea of completion or finish. Eschatos means last in order or last in a sequence.

Now, that's an important idea that we can save a lot of time if we just grasp this idea. This week, a lot of people are taking their finals. Right.

This is finals week for a lot of people, some people it was last week. So if you say, well, I had my final exam. Is that the last exam on earth? Is that the last exam you'll ever take? You might wish that was the case, but it's the last one in the sequence of exams for that course.

Right. Eschatos has quite the same meaning. When you say the last trump, we're not meaning the last one that's ever blown or not even the last one that's associated with a resurrection or with a feast or anything else.

It's the last signal in a particular. I'm freezing. It's the last one in a particular sequence.

So if it's a trumpet blast and if it's a signal, what this would mean is because I ask myself, all right, in the church age, what are the trumpets that we got? How many trumpets have you heard since you became a Christian in terms of, you know, from heaven? I don't know of any. I thought, well, if this is the last trumpet, where's the first trumpet and where's the second, third and fourth? Where are the rest of the trumpets? Well, I don't see any reference to them. I looked all through the scriptures.

Now we are going to see something that's interesting about the trumpets here in a minute. But how would this be the last trump? This is what I would suggest to you. This is the last call.

This is the last evolution. This is the last. We have plenty of callings.

We have plenty of commands, don't we? In our Christian life, we have commands to obedience. We have commands to holiness. We have commands to love.

We have commands to hope. We have commands to be faithful. We have commands to persevere.

We've got all kinds of commands. This in terms of our life in this age as believers is the last command. That's my suggestion as to how to understand this trumpet, because from now on, we're going to get our instructions in a different age, in a different context.

We will all be changed. We will have an immediate association with the Lord Jesus Christ. Our realm will change.

Our venue will change. Our tasks will change. Our abilities will change.

Everything is going to change. So this is in the same way that once you complete a course, after you take your final exam, you may move on and take other courses. You may do other forms of education and have other tests.

But that's the last one in that course. That's what this is. As a church age believer, the last command to which we respond is this command.

Rise to meet the Lord in the air. Dead, living, here is the last trump. Now, we also have two other sounds.

This is actually the third one in the sequence. It says, the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout. And the word shout is also interesting because it literally means a command.

This is kelusma, K-E-L-E-U-S-M-A. And the root of keluo, K-E-L-E-U-O, the verb from which this comes, means to motivate a thing, to impel a thing, to make something go. And so, telusma is a command of execution.

In the military, your commands to troops, especially when you're on parade or marching, have two parts. You have a command of preparation, a command of execution. There's usually two words.

So you say, parade, rest, order, arms, right shoulder, arms, and so on. There's a preparatory part of the command, and then there's the second part that is the command of execution. Well, telusma is sort of the command of execution.

And this apparently comes from the Lord Jesus himself. The shout, the voice of command, the impelling sound that begins this sequence is the Lord himself. He descends with a loud word of command.

And this kind of makes sense. Jesus says in other places, the day is coming when many who sleep in the dust of the earth will hear the voice of the Son of Man, and as many as here will live. And he, like calling Lazarus out from the grave, Lazarus, command of preparation, come forth, command of execution.

This, by the way, shoots holes in some of the arguments. One of the favorite reformed arguments is dead people can't do anything. But when Jesus gives a command to dead people, they do things.

Apparently he says, you know, the dead will hear the voice of the Son of Man, and as many as here will live. So the dead can hear and the dead can respond to a command according to scripture. So I just, that's a free, no charge extra.

Telusma, the Lord himself. Now, this is also interesting because if you look at some, I mentioned last time some of the differences between the rapture and the second coming seven years later, one of the differences is here, the Lord himself descends with a word of command. If you read Matthew 24 and other passages, it says that the Lord will send forth his angels to gather his elect from the four winds of heaven.

Remember that Matthew 24, 31, he will send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet and they will gather together his elect from the four winds from one end of heaven to the other. That's a description of the second coming. You have an Old Testament passage, Zechariah 9, 14, the Lord will be seen over them.

His arrow will go forth like lightning. The Lord God will blow the trumpet. And go with the whirlwinds from the south.

So, Joel chapter two, verse one, blow the trumpet in Zion, sound an alarm in my holy mountain. Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble for the day of the Lord is coming for it is at hand. Blow the trumpet.

Well, we have many trumpets both before and after this particular one. You can see another one just as a side note in Revelation chapter 11, verse 15. Remember there are seals, bowls and trumpets.

And we saw that those are three different perspectives on the sevenfold sequence of events as the lamb breaks the seals. The seals represent what's happening on earth. The trumpets are what happened from an angelic perspective and the bowls are what happened from on high, from the divine perspective.

All three of those sequences conclude with the great earthquake. But you have the seventh of those trumpets in Revelation 11, 15. The seventh angel sounded and there were loud voices in heaven saying the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign forever and ever.

Great refrain there of the Hallelujah chorus. It is based on that verse. But that is a signal trumpet and that obviously follows the rapture trumpet by anybody's estimation.

So, well not by anybody's, there are people who think that we've gone all through the tribulation and that that trumpet is the last trumpet that raises the dead in Christ. This is one of the arguments on the post-tribulation rapture front or those who believe the rapture and the second coming are the same. But, nice try.

So, the threefold call, first the shout of command from the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Second, the voice of the archangel. It is singular.

It is an archangel, the archangel. Now, here's my question. What have archangels got to do with the church? Who do we typically associate the archangel with? What one archangel can you name right off the bat? Who's the archangel? Michael, Gabriel is a great angel.

And actually, if you go to the book of Enoch, there are seven archangels mentioned. You've got Michael and Gabriel and Uriel and Remiel and a lot of others. They list seven of them there in Jewish tradition.

But Michael is the archangel that we are familiar with from scripture. Now, why would there be the voice of the archangel at this point? I ask myself, if the Lord Jesus is descending and he has given the shout of command to his saints, to his body and his bride, why do you need the voice of the archangel and why do you need the trump of God? Well, I don't think anybody can say they have the definitive answer to this, but I'll give you a suggestion. This is my suggestion.

You can discard it at will, drop it, kick it, send it as far away as you like. This is my thought. Two things.

First of all, what also happens right at the point of the rapture? Do we have a change of dispensation? What age ends at the rapture? Church age. What age resumes at the rapture? Old Testament age of Israel, right? So, if you want to alert the troops in the current dispensation, time to come home, the Lord Jesus calls them. If you want to let everybody else know, hey, your clock's running again, oh, Israel, who is going to deliver that, that noise, the archangel, and you've got the trump of God, because not only is it a, this is switch out the troops.

I've been reading all about George Washington in the first war for independence there in the 1770s, and you have movement of troops. There's fog, there's smoke, there's, you know, if the, if the commands are uncertain, the troops are going to falter. And so there is this clear demarcation.

One thing is ending and another is beginning. And remember, there is the church rising to meet the Lord in the air. What has dominated the air up to that point? What dominates the air right now? Who is the Prince of the power of the air and who is struggling against it? There is an angelic conflict.

Is there not? We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this age, what realm are we entering into when we as raptured church leave this earthly life in this earthly body? We're moving into that invisible realm where angels contend, right? What of the sets of signals and portents and time division markers in revelation speaks of that realm seals break on earth, who is worthy to open the scroll, the lamb, and he starts breaking those seals and things start happening in the earth. Then you go back to the seven trumpets and you've got the first trumpet sounding. This is the start of things from the angelic perspective for that 70th week.

And then from the divine perspective, you have the pouring out of the seven bowls. And it makes sense. Seals are made out of clay.

They're down here on the earth. Trumpets blow in the air. This is the invisible, atmospheric, stratospheric, celestial realms where the angels ascend and descend between heaven and earth.

And then you have the bowls. If you're going to pour something out of a bowl, it's got to be above

everything else to pour its contents out. And that's God's heavenly realm, the third heaven, the divine viewpoint on these things.

So as we leave the earth and the realm of the seals, what will we hear as the start of the 70th week of Daniel? It's not only the last trumpet for us, but it's the first trumpet, perhaps of those seven. It's just a thought, but there's a lot going on. This is a momentous, momentous time.

And let me take you to a place that I am sure you never thought we would go in this context. Turn with me back to Psalm 45. Psalm 45.

The first 50 Psalms are ascribed to David. This one is dedicated to the chief musician. It is set to the tune, The Lilies, which is a beautiful word in Hebrew, Shoshanim.

When you meet a Jewish girl, her name is Shoshana. That's Lily. A contemplation of the sons of Korah.

This is a maskil. This is a song that they will render vocally. And a song of love.

Now, if you have a new King James, do you have a superscription up there under Psalm 45? What does it say? Anything? Yeah. A song of love. The thing that is in view is the king and his queen.

So let me just skim through this real quickly. Try to keep up with me. My heart is overflowing with a good theme.

I recite my compositions concerning victory. The King, my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. You are fairer than the sons of men.

Grace is poured out upon your lips. Therefore, God has blessed you forever. Gird your sword upon your thigh, O mighty one.

This is the Lord Jesus Christ in his resurrected, kingly, messianic glory. Your glory and your majesty, in your majesty, ride prosperously because of truth, humility, and righteousness. And your right hand shall teach you awesome things.

Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies. The people fall under you. Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.

A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness. Therefore, God, your God, has anointed you, has messiahed you, with the oil of gladness, more than your companions.

Look at this in verse 8. All your garments are scented with myrrh and aloes and cassia. If you go to John chapter 19, verse 39, I think it is, and look at what Nicodemus provided for the burial of the Lord Jesus, it is myrrh and aloes. And cassia is basically, in fact, even today, cassia is sold as

cinnamon here in the United States.

It's a fragrant spice. Myrrh and aloes and spices. His garments are fragrant with this.

Why? Because he is the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. Out of the ivory palaces, by which they have made you glad, king's daughters are among your honorable women. At your right hand stands the queen, in gold from Ophir, his bride.

Listen, O daughter, consider it and incline your ear, talking to the queen, forget your own people also, and your father's house. Why? She's a Gentile. Got no father's house to be remembered, in terms of Israel.

Forget your people and your father's house, so the king will greatly desire your beauty, because he is your Lord. Worship him. The daughter of Tyre will come with a gift.

The rich among the people will seek your favor. The royal daughter is glorious within the palace. Her clothing is woven with gold.

She shall be brought to the king in robes of many colors. The virgins, her companions who follow her, shall be brought to you with gladness and rejoicing. They shall enter the king's palace.

Instead of your fathers shall be your sons, whom you shall make princes in all the earth. I will make your name to be remembered in all generations. The people shall praise you forever and ever." It's a picture of the coming to the throne of the victorious king with his queen, with his bride.

He's got on his sword. He's victorious and glorious in righteousness and truth. Look at Psalm 46.

God is our refuge and strength for a present help in trouble. We will not fear even though the tribulational events take place. The earth be removed.

The mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. Its waters roar and be troubled. The mountains shake with swelling.

There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God. People going through the tribulation are looking forward to the millennial Jerusalem with that river flowing out from under. The holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High shall be the place of the most high.

God is in the midst of her. She shall not be moved. God shall help her just at the break of dawn, the inception of the millennial kingdom.

The nations raged. The kingdoms were moved. He uttered his voice.

Do you see this? This section of Psalms is taking us through the sequence, right? Here's the king collecting his queen, glorious, ready to dominate the nations. Then you have the people on earth. Don't be worried.

Don't be moved. Watch for that river coming up from under the tabernacle. Even though the earth is removed and the mountains are carried into the sea and the waters roar and the mountains shake, don't worry.

God will help her at the break of dawn. The nations rage, but God's going to utter his voice and the earth will melt. The Lord of hosts is with us.

The God of Jacob is our refuge. Come behold the works of the Lord. Now look at Psalm 47.

Clap your hands, all you people. Shout to God with the voice of triumph. For the Lord, most high is awesome.

He is a great king over all the earth. He will subdue the peoples under us and the nations under our feet. This is the people of Israel, the people of Jacob.

He will choose our inheritance for us, the excellence of Jacob, whom he loves. This is the distribution of inheritance and allocation in the land. You remember in Ezekiel, that great tribal banding that goes horizontally across the kingdom.

Look at this. Look at verse five. Pay attention to verse five.

God has gone up with what? A shout. The Lord with what? The sound of a trumpet. God has not come down.

God has gone up. Who is God in this context? The Lord God, the Lord Jesus Christ. He has gone up with a shout, with the sound of a trumpet.

This is what kicks this off. And notice, this is a parallel distict. This is sort of a synonymous or complimentary statement.

God has gone up with a shout. The Lord, who is God, with the sound of a trumpet, which is equated with the shout. They're together.

Well, you can follow this through. These Psalms, 45, 46, 47, this whole section. On through 48, the glory of God in Zion is a panorama, a prophetic panorama of the very events that begin with the rapture of the church.

So it's a great reminder that there is a reason for every detail of scripture. The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel. Archangel deals with Israel and the trump of God.

And when that happens, the dead, now we don't have the sleeping, this is the dead in Christ will rise first. Proton. And this is sequence.

Jesus, of course, is the first fruits of those that sleep. There is another resurrection that's called

the first resurrection. When you get to Revelation, it says the rest of the dead live not until the thousand years were complete.

This is the first resurrection. Well, it's the first in that view, but it's not the first. Jesus is the first resurrection.

Church age believers are the second resurrection. The Old Testament saints are the third resurrection. And the great white throne judgment is the fourth resurrection.

Where the death and the sea and Hades all give up the dead that are in them. So once again, whether something is last or whether it is first, what is the context? This is my first exam. This is my last exam in that course.

Not the first that's ever been or the last that will ever be. So this is the signal. This is what we're listening for.

We have many imperatives. We have many opportunities. We have many challenges as believers in the church age.

And the last church age command to which we will respond is the Lord Jesus Christ speaking with His own voice saying probably the very same thing that you see in Revelation chapter four verse one. Come up here and we'll watch from here what is going to transpire down on earth for the next seven years. Come up here and I will show you things which will be hereafter just like John heard Revelation chapter four verse one.

So let's pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're gonna pick up here and see what the rest of these details tell us.