

March 13

Scriptures: Read 1 Thessalonians 4

Key Verse: “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.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16,17)

Overview

In the introduction, we saw that the Thessalonian believers were concerned about their Christian brothers and sisters who had died. Would they, by dying before the return of Jesus, be disqualified from the benefits and glories of that Day of the Lord? Paul writes to dispel their fears and the “ignorance” (v. 13) that has caused this concern (vv. 13-18).

On the basis of the historical fact of Jesus’ resurrection, Paul says we have cause to believe that all who put their trust in Him will be resurrected too. Those who have died “in Him” will rise with Him and “God will bring with Jesus” all of these resurrected ones on that Day (vv. 13,14). Those who are physically alive on that Day will also participate, but only after the “dead in Christ” have risen first. That Day will be announced with a heavenly command and all who believe in Christ (both “deceased” and “alive”) will “be caught up together... in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air” (vv. 15-17). From that point, the Church will forever be “with the Lord.”

This marvelous truth should bring “hope” (v. 13) and “comfort” (v. 18) to all who have loved ones dead in Christ, says Paul. For they’re not really dead at all. No, this is not denial of death; this is triumph over death. Our Saviour has risen — and so will we. And He will make sure that when He returns we are all there for the celebration.

Prayer

Help us, O Lord, to truly comfort one another with words of faith concerning those who’ve died in faith. Also, help us to walk properly today toward those who are outside the faith.