

# 1 Thessalonians 4:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

## Analysis

**For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first**—hoti autos ho Kyrios en keleusm ati, en phōnē archangelou kai en salpingi Theou, katabēsetai ap' ouranou, kai hoi nekroi en Christō anastēsontai prōton (ὅτι αὐτὸς ὁ Κύριος ἐν κελεύσματι, ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου καὶ ἐν σάλπιγῃ Θεοῦ, καταβήσεται ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ, καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστήσονται πρῶτον). This is Scripture's most detailed rapture description. Autos ho Kyrios (αὐτὸς ὁ Κύριος, 'the Lord himself')—Christ personally, not angels or intermediaries, descends.

Three audible signals accompany His descent:

1. keleusma (κέλευσμα, 'shout/cry of command')—military or ship-captain's authoritative command
2. phōnē archangelou (φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου, 'voice of archangel')—angelic announcement
3. salpinox Theou (σάλπιγξ Θεοῦ, 'trumpet of God')—divine oning (cf. 1 Cor 15:52, 'last trump'). **And the dead in Christ shall rise first**—prōton (πρῶτον, 'first') answers the Thessalonians' question: dead believers aren't disadvantaged but receive resurrection bodies before living believers are transformed.

This sequence ensures no believer is excluded from resurrection glory.

## Historical Context

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Paul's rapture teaching drew on Jewish apocalyptic imagery (Daniel 7:13-14; Zechariah 14:5) and Jesus's Olivet Discourse (Matt 24:30-31). The 'shout,' 'archangel's voice,' and 'trumpet' indicate public, unmistakable appearing—not secret rapture but visible return. The phrase 'dead in Christ shall rise first' established orthodox eschatology: bodily resurrection precedes eternal state. This contradicted both Greek philosophy (which denied bodily resurrection, Acts 17:32) and some Jewish views (which expected only living believers would enjoy Messianic kingdom).

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

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1. How does the publicity of Christ's return (shout, archangel, trumpet) affect your understanding of the rapture?
2. What comfort does 'the dead in Christ shall rise first' provide regarding believing loved ones who've died?
3. How does expectation of bodily resurrection (not merely spiritual immortality) affect your view of death and eternal life?

## Interlinear Text

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ὅτι αὐτὸς ὁ κύριος ἐν κελεύσματι ἐν φωνῇ  
For himself G3588 the Lord G2962 in a shout G2752 in the voice G5456  
G3754 G846 G2962 G1722 G2752 G1722 G5456

ἀρχαγγέλου καὶ ἐν σάλπιγgi θεοῦ καταβήσεται ἀπ'  
of the archangel and in the trump of God shall descend from  
G743 G2532 G1722 G4536 G2316 G2597 G575

οὐρανοῦ καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστήσονται  
heaven and G3588 the dead in Christ shall rise  
G3772 G2532 G1722 G5547 G450

πρῶτον

first  
G4412

## Additional Cross-References

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**Revelation 1:7** (Parallel theme): Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

**1 Corinthians 15:23** (References Christ): But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

**Matthew 16:27** (Parallel theme): For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

**Matthew 25:31** (Parallel theme): When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

**2 Thessalonians 1:7** (References Lord): And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

**Isaiah 27:13** (References Lord): And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

**Acts 1:11** (Parallel theme): Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

**Psalms 47:5** (References God): God is gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.

**Zechariah 9:14** (References God): And the LORD shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the Lord GOD shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south.

**2 Thessalonians 2:1** (References Christ): Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,