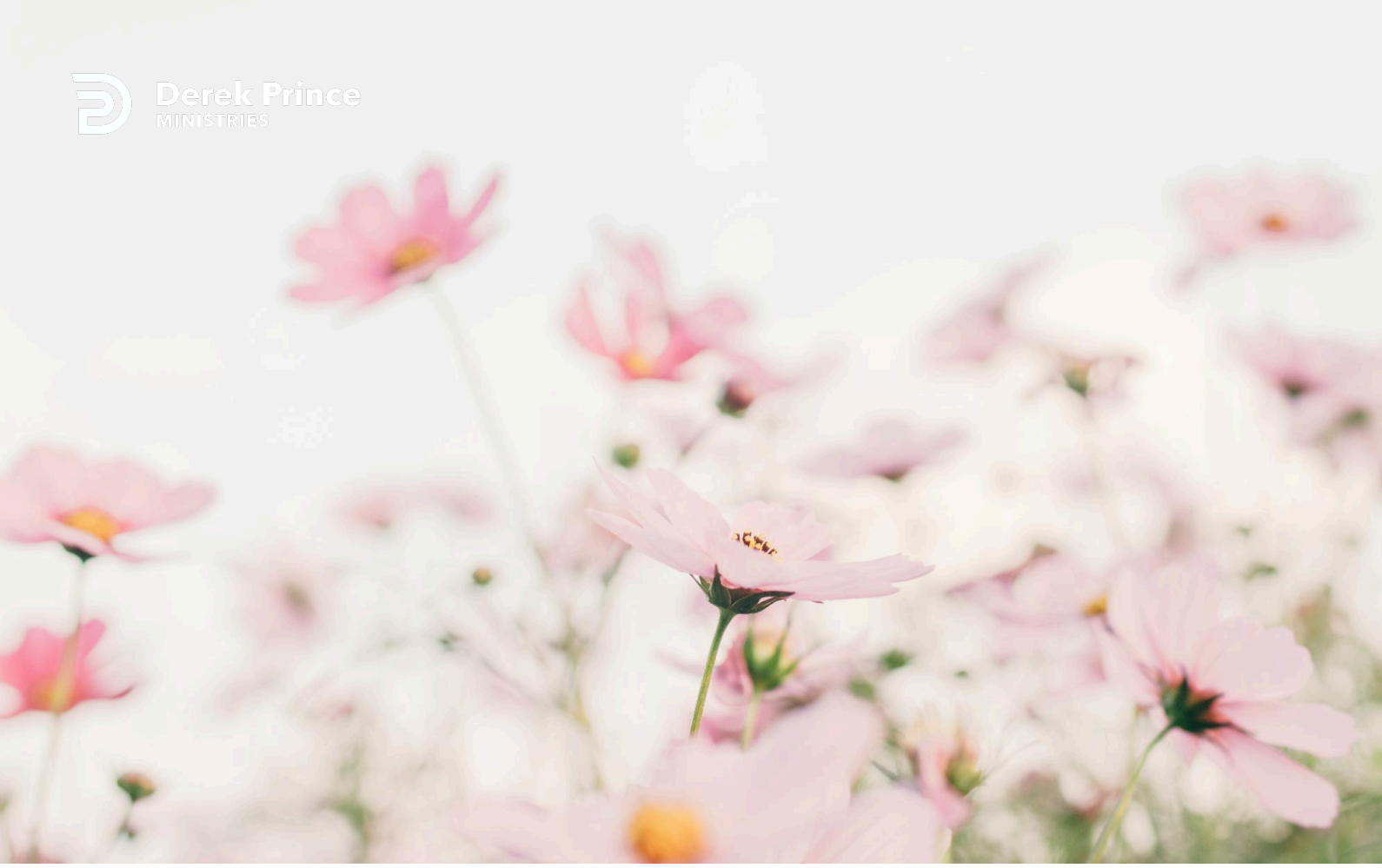

Three Dramatic Sounds



Foundations (Day 305)
by Derek Prince

In 1 Thess. 4:13-18 Paul describes how Christians will be resurrected to meet Christ at His coming.

> "But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 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. 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. Therefore comfort one another with these words."

The primary purpose of Paul's teaching here is to comfort Christian believers concerning other Christians – relatives or other loved ones – who have died. These Christians who have died are described as "those who have fallen asleep," or, more precisely, "those who sleep in Jesus." This means those who have died in the faith of the gospel. Paul's message of comfort is based on the assurance that these, and all other true believers, will be resurrected.

The actual picture which Paul gives of this phase of the resurrection is as follows.

First, there will be three dramatic sounds to herald it. The first sound will be the shout of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, as He Himself had predicted.

> "All who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation." (John 5:28-29)

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It is the voice of Christ alone that has power to call the dead out of their graves. However, at this particular moment He will call forth only the righteous dead – only those who have died in the faith. The calling forth of the unrighteous dead will be reserved for a later phase of resurrection.

The other two sounds that will be heard at this point will be the voice of an archangel and the trumpet of God. The archangel here referred to is probably Gabriel, since it appears to be his special ministry to proclaim upon earth impending interventions of God in the affairs of men.

All through the Bible, one main use of the trumpet is to gather the Lord's people together in any special time of crisis. The sound of the trumpet at this point will be the signal for all the Lord's people to gather together with Him as He descends from heaven to meet them.

Devotional

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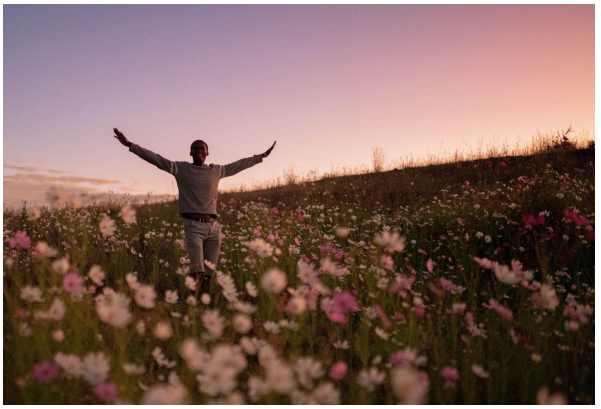

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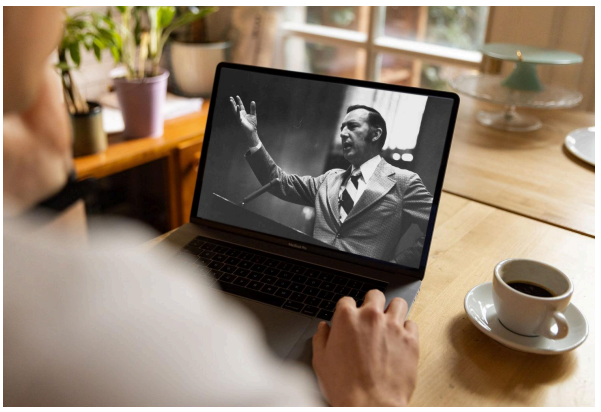

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