

A Meeting In The Air



Foundations (Day 307)
by Derek Prince

Today we continue our study of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Verse 17 contains one other significant Greek word. Paul says that we shall meet the Lord "in the air." The Greek word used here is aer.

This is one of two Greek words normally translated "air." The other word is aither. The difference between these two words is that aer denotes the lower air in immediate contact with the earth's surface; aither denotes the higher, rarer air, some considerable distance above the earth's surface. Since Paul uses the word aer in relation to the Lord's return, he indicates that the Lord's gathering together with His raptured saints will take place in the lower air, quite close to the earth's surface.

Paul refers again to this same moment of resurrection and rapture in 1 Corinthians.

> "Behold, I tell 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 trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (15:51-52)

Paul here unfolds "a mystery" – that is, a previously unrevealed secret of God's plan for the Church. The secret thus revealed is this: all true believers will be raptured together at the Lord's coming, but not all those to be raptured will have died and been resurrected.

Those who are alive at the Lord's coming will not die at all but will simply undergo an instantaneous and miraculous change in their bodies. By this change their bodies will be rendered exactly like those of the other believers who have been resurrected from the dead.

In the next verse Paul briefly summarises the nature of the change that will take place.

> "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." (1 Cor. 15:53)

Instead of being mortal and corruptible, the new body of each believer will be immortal and incorruptible.

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Does this account given by Paul constitute a complete picture of the resurrection of all believers before the establishment of Christ's kingdom in the millennium?

To this question the answer would appear to be no. For it would seem that at least two further stages in the resurrection of the righteous are recorded in the book of Revelation. In the coming two days we will finish this week studying those stages.

Devotional

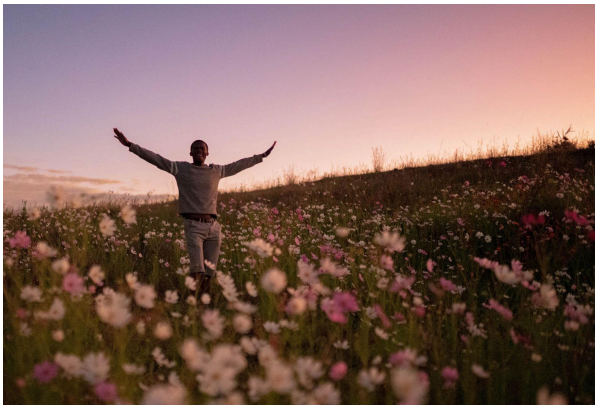
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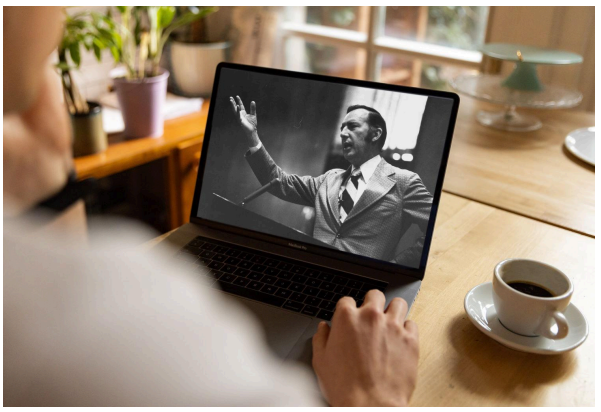
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