

10/17/99

**1Thessalonians 4:13-18**

As we have seen throughout the study of this epistle, Paul desires to communicate to the Thessalonians the coming of Christ for his saints. 1:10, 2:19, 3:13.

And now once again, Paul refers to the coming of Christ in relation to resurrection. 4:13-18

The Holy Spirit is called the earnest “arobon”, the down payment or engagement ring, that insures the return of Christ for us. Eph. 1:14; 2 Cor. 5:5; 1:22

The return of Christ is as sure as the resurrected power of the Holy Spirit we have to live a resurrected life. 1Thess. 4:1-12

This passage is often used as a classic text for the Rapture of the church but it is taught in view answering the question of the state of the believer who has died before the Lord’s return. vs. 15-17

1. They weren't even asking whether they would be raised from the dead, they knew they would.
2. Neither were they asking if they were going to be with the Lord, they were sure they would.
3. Nor did they ask if they were going to meet him the air, they were anticipating it.
4. Will they not be included?

5. Will they miss out and have some disadvantage, over those who are alive at His coming for His church?

When Timothy returned to Paul, he communicated their concerns, regarding the relationship between the saints who had died in the Lord and his coming for his church.

\* How did they fit into the program!

And so Paul writes for two reasons.

- 1) To remove their ignorance. 1Thess. 4:13
- 2) To comfort or strengthen them. 1Thess. 4:18

**4:13-14      The proclamation of hope.**

**4:13**      The distinction of sorrow.

- 1) Thessalonians were ignorant as to the hope of their loved ones who had slept and they were sorrowing.
  - a) The phrase, “I do not want you to be ignorant brethren” is used as a statement of instruction or correction regarding Scriptural truth. Rom. 11:25, 1Cor. 10:1, 12:1
  - b) The word sleep “knomonenon” is euphemism used to express what occurs at the death of a Christian, in view of the awakening of the body at the resurrection but has nothing to do

with soul and spirit of man. Jn. 11:11;  
1Cor. 7:39; 11:30; 15:6, 18, 20, 51

\* The tense is the present passive  
which refers to any and to all who  
may yet fall asleep

1)) The word means to lie down, get  
our word cemetery, a place of  
sleep.

\* The emphasis is on the state of  
the believer at death not the  
resurrection at this point!

2)) The believer never dies. Jn. 11:26

3)) The word is used of Lazarus'  
death. Jn. 11:11

4)) The word is also used of Peter  
sleeping between two soldiers.  
Acts 12:6

5)) The word is used of Stephen  
where he died. Acts 7:60

\* The word does Not teach soul  
sleep, that is often taught by using  
scriptures from Job and  
Ecclesiastes.

2) Paul did not want them to be sorrowing as  
others that have no hope. Eph. 2:12;  
Heb.2:14-15

a) Not that there is anything wrong with  
sorrowing for loved ones, but it  
should not be sorrow that has no hope  
regarding their state. Eph. 2:12

b) They are better off than those who are  
still alive, in comparison, for all their  
struggles and warfare is over!

-Col. 1:27 Christ is the hope of glory

-Tit. 2:13 Christ is the blessed hope

#### **4:14      The distinguishing hope.**

1) The pronoun “we”, refers to Paul and the  
others who had established the church.

2) If we believe that Jesus died and rose  
from the dead, is statement of certainty,  
not doubt! 1Thess. 1:10

a) Jesus is firstfruits of them that sleep,  
the guarantee in kind of all to follow.  
1Cor. 15:20

1)) It is not stated that Jesus “slept”  
because was truly separated from  
the Father due to becoming sin for  
the world and He was raised in the  
three days, He is not waiting for  
His glorified body!

2)) He had both the power to lay His  
life down and to raise it up again.  
Jn. 10:17

b) The instant a believer dies, he or she is  
instantly present before the Lord.  
2Cor. 5:1-8

\* Paul says this twice in the passage!

c) Paul the apostle makes this very clear  
again as he declares, “To live is Christ  
and to die is gain.” Phil. 1:21

\* Dead can not separate us from Christ only join us to Christ. Rom. 8::39

- 3) Even so God will bring back with Him those who sleep in Jesus.
- a) The Greek is “through” not “in”, it is due to His dying for us that we are able to sleep through Jesus.
  - b) The phrase “will bring” first implies that those who have fallen asleep are with Jesus.
    - \* The tense is the aorist passive focusing on those who in fact have die at Thessalonica and are the topic of this writing.
  - c) The phrase also implies that they will miss out on anything, returning with Jesus.
    - \* Therefore, when Christ returns for his church, the believers that have slept will be coming back with him. 1Thess. 3:13

#### **4:15-17      The particulars of the hope.**

**4:15**      The authority of our hope.

- 1) The authority that Paul refers to is the Lord’s no his own opinion.
  - a) The plural pronoun is used again “we”, Paul and the others.

- b) Confirming and testifying to the truth of the information.
- 2) The words are not found anywhere in the gospels.
- a) So without any doubt, this was by special revelation.
  - b) Even as Paul quoted Jesus in Acts, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”, yet it is not found in any of the gospels. Acts 20:35
  - c) Linski the Greek scholar translates the phrase “in connection with the Lord’s words”, declaring it is not a quotation but rather a reference to all that the Lord said about His Parousia?
- 3) The gathering of the living is the focus.
- a) We which are alive and remain until the coming “parousia”, will by no means precede, prevent or those who are asleep.
    - \* The word precede, Literally means “advantage”, the living will have no advantage over those asleep in Christ!
  - b) The reason is being is that it is hard to arrive before someone who has left before you!
    - \* For whatever the reason was, Paul had spoken to the Thessalonians about the Day of the Lord but the

particulars of the dead had not been discussed. 1Thess. 5:2

#### **4:16-17      The specific order of our hope.**

**4:16**      The dead rise first.

- 1) The Lord himself will descend from heaven. 1Thess. 1:10
  - a) With a shout.
    - 1)) The word “shout” is used only this time in the New Testament and is used for a military command as to oarsman, soldier or chariot, communicating authority.
    - 2)) All that are in the grave shall hear my voice. Jn. 5:28
  - b) With the voice of an archangel.
    - 1)) Possibly Michael but not necessarily, declaring the announcement. Jude 9
    - 2)) Jesus said, “They that are in the grave shall hear my voice”. Jn. 5:28
  - c) And with the trump of God. 1Cor. 15:52
    - 1)) This trump should not mistake it with the 7th trump of the book of Revelation. Rev. 11:15
    - 2)) heard a great voice as of a trump in reference to Jesus Christ. Rev. 1:10 (attention)

- 2) The dead in Christ shall rise first
  - a) We shall be changed. 1Cor. 15:50-55
  - b) In the likeness of Christ resurrection and in relation to our physical bodies but not in likeness. 1Cor. 15:35-38, 42-44
  - c) The apostle is focusing on the order of events within the time domain of man, linear, not in the time domain of God, eternal. Eccl. 3:15
    - 1)) Those who have fallen asleep in Christ have been present with Christ since their death and at His coming their is the relationship to the physical resurrection.
    - 2)) They have been raised, instantly present with the Lord. 2Cor. 5:1-8  
\* Remember the dead are with Christ!

#### **4:17      The living rise second.**

- 1) The living will be caught up together with them, those in verse sixteen.
  - a) The phrase caught up “harpazo” means to snatch up forcefully, suddenly.  
\* The Latin counterpart is “”rapare” where we get our word rapture but “harpazo” means the same.

- b) The phrase is used of the seed plucked up by the wicked one, Satan, in the Parable of the Sower. Matt. 13:19
  - c) The phrase is used of Philip as the Spirit caught away Philip from the Ethiopian Eunuch. Acts 8:39
  - c) It is used of Paul caught up to the third heaven. 2Cor. 12:2
    - \* The first reference to the rapture is declared by Jesus. Jn. 14:1-3
  - d) The joint venture will be first those who have died and then those alive, together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.
- 2) The purpose is to meet the Lord in the air.
- a) The word meet “apanteesis” means to encounter and used of a formal reception for royal magistrates by going out to meet them and accompanying them back on the final part of the journey, appearing four times in the New Testament.
  - b) The word is used of believers meeting Paul at his port of entry at Rome and accompanying him the rest of the way. Acts 28:15
- 3) The result will be to always be with the Lord.
- a) The bride of Christ is removed prior to the Tribulation and Great-Tribulation. Rom. 5:9; 1Thess. 5:9

- b) The Bema seat of Christ will take place at that time. Rom. 14:10; 2Cor. 5:0; 1Cor. 3:8-15; 4:5

**4:18** The purpose of the hope.

- 1) Our loved ones won't miss anything.
- 2) We the church will be taken out before wrath.
  - \* 1Thess. 1:10; 5:9, Rom. 5:9; Rev. 3:10
- 3) Tragic that as the Jews failed to see the two comings of their messiah, so some Christians fail to see the two aspects of his second coming.
  - a) For His saints.
  - b) With His saints.
    - \* There is first a removal of ignorance, secondly a source of strength understanding the truth of God.