

I THESSALONIANS 4:13-18

**PAUL'S PASTORAL PASSAGE
OR
"UP, UP, AND AWAY"**

I THESSALONIANS 4:13-18

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. **15** 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 not precede those who have fallen asleep. **16** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. **17** Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.



PAUL'S PASTORAL PASSAGE

“This passage is ‘pastoral,’ meant to comfort those grieved and confused by the death of beloved Christians. The assurance that all the righteous without distinction will be with the Lord forever, and united at the Coming of Christ, is the burden of this passage.”

--New Geneva Study Bible Commentary

We will break this passage into four parts.

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|------|------------|---------------|
| I. | Vs. 13 | Tone |
| II. | Vss. 14-15 | Trust |
| III. | Vss. 16-17 | Timing |
| IV. | Vs. 18 | Take it easy! |

PAUL'S PASTORAL PASSAGE: TONE

I. Tone

“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.”

But . . . Uninformed . . . Asleep . . . Hope.

PAUL'S PASTORAL PASSAGE: TONE

But . . .

Not “therefore.”

Paul wasn't wrapping things up or summarizing his thoughts. He was introducing a new topic and transitioning to what was really on the Thessalonians minds.

PAUL'S PASTORAL PASSAGE: TONE

Ignorant, uninformed

How were they uninformed?

What were they taught previously on this subject?

What caused their confusion?

“The Apostle wanted to remove both their ignorance and their grief, but the solution to their grief lay in removing their ignorance which would also give hope—a hope the unbelieving world could not have.”

--J. Hampton Keathley, III

PAUL'S PASTORAL PASSAGE: TONE

Asleep: Greek=*koimaō*

Common usage of the word in those days and in scripture to describe death.

See 1 Cor. 11:30. Ref. “a number of you are weak and sick, and many sleep

John 11:11. Ref. Lazarus

Acts 7:60. Ref. Stephen as he was being martyred.

PAUL'S PASTORAL PASSAGE: TONE

Asleep

“Sleep has its waking, death will have its resurrection.”

C.F. Hogg

Sleep>>Temporary>>has its waking

Death>>Also temporary>>has its resurrection

“For the Christian, death is no more permanent or harmful than sleep.” Tony Evans

PAUL'S PASTORAL PASSAGE: TONE

First century pagans viewed death with horror, as the end of everything, opposite of what Christians believed.

“Once a man dies there is no resurrection.” Aeschylus

“There is hope for those who are alive, but those who have died are without hope.” Theocritus

“When once our brief light sets, there is one perpetual night through which we must sleep.” Catullus

“I was not; I became; I am not; I care not.” epitaph on tombstone

PAUL'S PASTORAL PASSAGE: TONE

In 125 AD a Greek named Aristeides was writing to one of his friends. This is what he said:

“If any righteous man among the Christians passes from this world, they rejoice and offer thanks to God, and they escort his body with songs and thanksgiving as if he were setting out from one place to another.”

To which we would reply: “Yep.”

PAUL'S PASTORAL PASSAGE: TONE

“Apart from the revelation of God in Christ and in the Bible, the world today still has no assurance of life after death. All the other leaders of the various religions and philosophies of the world lie smoldering in their graves. Only one has come forth from the grave to validate His claims and prove that He is the way, the truth, and the life, and that is the person of the Lord Jesus.”

Warren Weirsbe

PAUL'S PASTORAL PASSAGE: TONE

Hope

“An ignorant Christian can be a hopeless Christian. And as sure as wrong doctrine leads to wrong beliefs, wrong beliefs lead to wrong living. To know the truth is to be set free from the hopelessness of ignorance.”

Tony Evans

PAUL'S PASTORAL PASSAGE: TRUST

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

15 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 not precede those who have fallen asleep.

PAUL'S PASTORAL PASSAGE: TRUST

Paul writes/speaks with confidence, reassuring the Thessalonians.

From Zane Hogen:

“These Christians did not miss the Rapture, as some may have thought. Rather, Christ’s resurrection guarantees their resurrection as well, when He comes.”

PAUL'S PASTORAL PASSAGE: TRUST

From Paul, via Compton:

“Trust me on this: If Christ was resurrected, you will be also.”

Back to the basics, folks. If Christ wasn't resurrected, we have nothing.

PAUL'S PASTORAL PASSAGE: TIMING

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

THE TOP TEN WAYS TO KNOW IF YOU ARE OBSESSED WITH PROPHECY¹

10. You always leave the top down on your convertible in case the Rapture happens.
9. You never buy green bananas
8. You talk your church into adapting the '60s pop song, "Up, Up, and Away" as a Christian hymn.
7. Bar code scanners make you nervous
6. You refuse a tax refund check because the amount comes to \$666
5. You can name more signs of the times than you can commandments.
4. You believe that there is an original Greek and Hebrew text with Schofield's notes.
3. You believe the term "Church Fathers" refers to Hal Lindsey and Tim LaHaye.
2. You get good bumps when you hear a trumpet.

NUMBER ONE WAY TO KNOW IF YOU ARE OBSESSED WITH PROPHECY:

I. You use the Left Behind books as devotional reading

PAUL'S PASTORAL PASSAGE: TIMING

OK, guys. Time to hold on to your seats. Literally!

I can think of nothing better than to be **RAPTURED RIGHT NOW** so as to be spared having to dissect this next passage.

Let's have some fun.

PAUL'S PASTORAL PASSAGE: TIMING

“When the scripture says ‘the trump of God,’ there is no actual trumpet sound. It simply means His voice is ‘like a trumpet.’”

Who said this? Was it

- A. Tom Constable
- B. J.Vernon McGee
- C. Warren Weirsbe
- D. Rich Brito

PAUL'S PASTORAL PASSAGE: TIMING

You are wondering, so here you go:

“In the Greek text, each of the three nouns [shout of command, voice of an arch angel, the trump of God] has the preposition “with” (Greek ‘en’), describing the Manner of His return. Each noun also lacks the Greek article which is often present with the preposition ‘en’ when SPECIFICITY is in view rather than QUALITY.”

In other words: “with a shout of command in an archangel-like voice, even with the voice like the trumpet of God Himself.”

PAUL'S PASTORAL PASSAGE: TIMING

Christ's imminent return.

Imminent=approaching; or the next event on the agenda of God's program. The "next step."

Imminent and impending coming of Christ does not equal
Immediate and soon coming.

PAUL'S PASTORAL PASSAGE: TIMING

Imminency: an event is 'hanging overhead'; it is something that is ready to occur or could occur at any moment.

“While other things may happen before the imminent event, nothing else must occur before that event happens. If something else must occur first, then that event is not imminent.” The Expositors Bible Commentary

Paul believed that Jesus could come in his lifetime, not would come in his lifetime. Paul speaks for all of us!

PAUL'S PASTORAL PASSAGE: TIMING

PRE-TRIBULATION

- The Rapture will take place before the 7 years of Tribulation
- Believe there are no specific events that God predicted would take place before the Rapture. IE “thief in the night”
- Jesus will meet us in the air, and take us to heaven.
- Jesus’ “appearance”, saints up, Jesus and saints up.

POST-TRIBULATION

- Believe we could be living in the 7 years of Tribulation, and the Rapture will take place at the end.
- Believe there are prophesied events that will take place before the Rapture (Dan 9:27)
- Believe this is what Jesus taught in the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24:29-31)
- Believe Jesus will meet us in the air, then immediately return to earth to set up His kingdom
- Jesus’ “appearance”, saints up, Jesus and saints down.

PAUL'S PASTORAL PASSAGE: TAKE IT EASY!

“It is not the details which are important. What is important is that life and in death the Christian is in Christ and that is a union which nothing can break.” Barclay’s Study Bible

PAUL'S PASTORAL PASSAGE TAKE IT EASY!

Final comments from Max Lucado.