

Scripture Reading: *1 Thessalonians 4:13-18* (NKJV)

Key Verses: *V. 18*

Prayer:

Introduction:

The Apostle Paul turned his attention to another area of deficiency in the Thessalonians' understanding, which had probably come to his attention through Timothy.

Though Paul had already mentioned the future in this letter ([1:10](#); [2:12](#), [19](#); [3:13](#)), he turned to it again and devoted considerable space to instruction and exhortations dealing with Christ's return ([4:13-5:11](#)).

The subject of the rest of [chapter 4](#) is the relationship of the Lord's return to believers who had died. This is the classic passage in the Bible on the Rapture of the church.

4:13. Paul introduced these instructions in such a way as to lay no guilt on the Thessalonians for their lack of knowledge. After all, they were new believers. He again called them **brothers**, emphasizing their equality of standing before God despite their knowledge deficiency.

Those who fall asleep are Christians who die. The figure of sleep for death is common in the New Testament (cf. [Mark 5:39](#); [John 11:11](#)). This is not sleep of the soul, however, because Paul wrote elsewhere that a Christian

who is absent from his body is present with the Lord ([2 Cor. 5:8](#); cf. [Phil. 1:23](#); [1 Thes. 5:10](#)).

2 Corinthians 5:8 (NKJV)

⁸ We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

Philippians 1:23 (NKJV)

²³ For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is* far better.

1 Thessalonians 5:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

It is rather the "sleep" of the body in the earth until it is resurrected, changed into a glorious body, and reunited with the soul ([1 Cor. 15:35-57](#); [2 Cor. 5:1-9](#)).

Paul wanted the Thessalonians to be neither ignorant nor grieving **like the rest of men**, that is, like unbelievers, over the death of fellow believers. Christians do grieve over the loss of loved ones; this is a normal human experience which even Jesus shared ([John 11:35](#)). But the grief of Christians differs from that of unbelievers, for the latter **have no hope** of bodily resurrection to glory with Christ ([1 Thes. 4:16](#)).

4:14. Two reasons why Christians should not grieve like unbelievers are that Christians have a revelation from God that gives them hope and they have a glorious future with Christ. Just as certainly as **Jesus died and** was resurrected

by the Father, so **God will** unite the resurrected dead in Christ with their Savior at His coming.

I want to preach tonight on the subject:

“With These Words”

With these words comes:

I. **Reassurance (V. 13)**

II. **Reunion (Vv. 14 & 17)**

See also: **I John 3:2; Php. 3:21; I Cor. 15:35-44, 52-54**

III. **Return (V. 16)**

IV. **Rapture (V. 17)**

See also: **Rev. 4:1; I Thess 5:9**

V. **Rest (V. 18)**

Conclusion:

I realize something else when I approach “these words:

You see, “with these words” also comes:

1. **Conviction** (If you’re not saved)!
2. **Conviction/Concern** (If you’re saved but not close to Him)!
3. **Comfort** (If you’re living and looking for Him)!

Invitation Hymn: (N/A) # _____ “ _____ ”

*Opening remarks/Introduction borrowed from: The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

*Edited/Altered, Preached by me:

Beach, B. at OBC—Dalton, GA.—Wed 8/14/13—Pastorate

WHBC-p.m.—Dalton, GA.—8/25/24--Pastorate