

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

A Special Hope

A YOUNG CHURCH IN A HOPELESS WORLD

- Paul is addressing the worry of what happens when Christians die
- The primary message of this text is comfort & encouragement
- It is more pastoral than it is end times, positional or preparatory
- Christians do not grieve in hopelessness, like the world
- Salvation through Christ changed death to sleep (1 Cor. 11:30; John 11:11; 2 Pet 3:4)
- Sleep refers to the body, not the soul (Luke 16; 2 Cor. 5:8)
- We get the word 'cemetery' which means sleeping place
- Those who are asleep as a continual relationship with Christ in heaven
- Those who sleep will not miss the victorious & glorious coming of Jesus
- When he comes to snatch or take by force, Latin: rapere (rapture) Greek: harpze
- Those believing souls will descend with Him
- Paul does not speak of Jesus death as sleep but as our visual example
- Those passed away are sleeping in Jesus or sleeping through Jesus
- By the word - means by the authority of another, here it references Jesus
- 'We' hear means probably the general Church sense, or Church for all ages
- The special revelation was that they will go first, and the living second

JESUS OUR EXAMPLE

- Jesus died and was resurrected by God as an example of our plan (1 Cor. 15)
- Just like he was raised we shall be also, Like Jesus we are sons & daughters of God
- So, when a Christian dies, grief is different, no goodbyes, this is not the end (2 Cor. 4:14)
- Those heavenly souls will meet their sleeping bodies

A SPECIAL GIFT FOR FAMILY

- These are special, family reserved only for us, like family jewels passed down
- Matthew 24 & 25 along with Revelation don't really give this any attention
- These verses are special revelations for us few only, because of Jesus love for us
- Romans 8:31-39, death does not jeopardize those believers passed away
- Those asleep are immune to death, 'by the word of the Lord'
- In the New Testament, parousia is seen as imminent and undeniable
- 2 Thess. 2 - not to be shaken from their composure
- This is not a preview or forecast but a comfort & warmth for a special, set apart people
- This was to alleviate confusion, distress or excessive grief
- It is ok for us to anticipate the return with extremely high peace & joy
- He Himself will descend, Rapture is meant to encourage hearts first
- Clouds are a medium in scripture like the transfiguration, Mt. Sinai, Isaiah in the temple
- Glorious, personal and permanent, We will all be together with Him one day, whole