

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. ***Enjoy discovering more about Him!***

## "COMFORT AND HOPE FOR BELIEVERS" | 1 THESSALONIANS 4: 13-18 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

### WARM-UP QUESTION:

*How do you spend your time waiting for a friend or family member to arrive at your place?*

### ***"Sleeping Believers" (1 Thess 4: 13-16)***

The bible describes believers who have died as asleep because they will rise again like waking up. **How could that impact someone's view of death?**

When the Rapture happens, it will be Jesus himself who comes to unite both the dead and living believers. **What does that show about Jesus? What does that mean for His followers?**

### ***"Living Believers" (1 Thess 4: 17-18)***

Paul wants people to be encouraged that when Jesus comes back, all believers will be reunited with Jesus and stay together forever. **How does the thought of that reunion impact you?**

### REFLECTION QUESTION:

Paul wanted people to know that all believers will be reunited with Jesus at His Second Coming. Not one of them will miss out or be forgotten. But each of us has a choice to trust Him and commit our lives to Him to be part of His family. **Have you committed your life to Jesus? Are there people in your life you could share the gospel with? Pray and ask God to encourage you so you can share your faith with others this week.**

# 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

8-20-23

## Comfort and Hope for Believers

### I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2-8 AP: @Risk. Grill/Chill. Selah. Missions P. Foundations. Moms. Childcare.
- B. No *Remodel Tour* today because of Rain.
- C. Slide9 Baby Dedication 3rd. parents: Brandon & Alyssa Zingarelli. Brandon Donato Zingarelli. [both Police Officers. Brandon attended our school. Alyssa @ CM almost 10 yrs]
- D. Slide10 Prayer: [new series Wed Nite. Why did Jesus Ask so Many Questions?]

### II. Intro: Comfort and Hope for Believers

- A. 2 weeks ago, we left off with the Thessalonian believers thinking *if the Lord's return is imminent, then why should we work?* (4:11,12)
  1. Today Paul is addressing their concern, and should be ours also, *if the Lord is returning for us/living bel's, what about our believing friends who have died, will they miss out?*
  2. Quick answer, Nope! Actually, we will be reunited w/them at the *Rapture Reunion*.
- B. Let's start with vs.18, which is for me to do this morning, and us you to do often.
  1. He doesn't say ... **Therefore** would you please write out a large *end times chart*. **No. Therefore** would you have church fights over it. **No.** He just says **be informed** (13) & **encourage/comfort each other** (18).
  2. This is a **comfort** passage, exactly like John 14 was. (*Let not your hearts be troubled*)
  3. Christ's **1st coming** brought **salvation** through his death and resurrection, **but** his **2nd coming** will bring about *the resurrection of our bodies* which is the final goal and **hope** of our salvation.
  4. **Christ's Coming** is a source of **comfort** and **hope** for believers.
    - a) His promise to **return** brings our ultimate **transformation**, **and** it **unites** believers with Him.
  5. The **2nd Coming** has **Implications** for *how we live our lives day to day*.

- a) Slide11 Paul sums it up well when he writes, *...training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ...* (Titus 2:12-13).
- b) Waiting for his return is **not passive**, it is an active purifying of our lives, in the pursuit of **holiness in readiness** for our Lord.

C. **Outline:** questions answered with ***Sleeping Believers & Living Believers***.

### III. Slide12 **SLEEPING BELIEVERS (13-16) READ ALL**

A. Slide13 **SLEEPING BELIEVERS, ARE WITH THE LORD NOW**

B. **We do not want you to be uninformed** - this is actually a *formula* (Paul uses it 5 other times) it means he wishes to **introduce a new point**.

1. Don't be **ignorant** of *God's prophetic plan*. Which sounds like we can have some understanding regarding the end times.

C. **Asleep** - used 18 x's in NT (5 x's phys sleep. 13 x's death of bel). It is only used for **believers** death (never unbel's).

1. **Death** is nothing more than to **sleep** to a believer. It's the idea of waking again from sleep. **As sleep has its waking, so death has its resurrection.**
2. Jesus spoke it to Jarius regarding his daughter, *the child is not dead, but sleeping*. Mrk.5:39. He said of Laz, *our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go, that I may wake him up*. [oh, then he'll wake up. *Laz is dead*]
3. So death is not the end.

D. **Asleep** - this **did not represent** some kind of *soul sleep*, as taught by Jehovah Witnesses or 7th Day Adventists, **that the spirit or soul after death is in an unconscious state**.

1. When a Christian dies, **the body** is committed to the grave (1 Cor 15:42), **but the spirit** is in the presence of the Lord, very much awake (2 Cor 5:8). Mayhue

- E. That you may not **grieve** as others do who have **no hope** - does this mean *we followers of Jesus* are not allowed to **grieve** over a loss? Of course not.
1. Christians sorrow because **God made us to weep**. [eg. Jesus when He saw Mary *after Laz died*, **he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. And he said, Where have you laid him? They said to him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. So the Jews said, See how he loved him!**]
  - a) What a Savior weeping not just **for us in our sin**, but **with us in our suffering**.
  2. Christians sorrow because **God made us to weep**, **BUT** it's not the **hopeless sorrow** of the world. [we have **hope in the midst of grief**]
  - a) So yes, we grieve as Christians, and I pray we grieve well.
  - b) **No Hope** comes against *universalism*, someone has **no hope**!
- F. **Our** resurrection is based on **His** resurrection.
- G. **Those who have fallen asleep** (14) refer exclusively to church age saints (this is the resurrection of believers of **this** dispensation). [OT saints raised at end of Tribulation]
1. **Note also these *sleeping believers are with Him***.
  2. So, **how are they with Him here, and not with Him in vs.16?**
    - a) **Sp/soul with Him. Body not with Him.**
  3. The Christian doctrine of resurrection **assures us** that **death is not the end**; the **grave is not the end**.
    - a) **The body goes *to sleep*, but the soul goes to be with the Lord (Phil.1:20-24).**
    - b) When the Lord returns, He will bring **the soul** with Him, will raise **the body** in glory, and will **unite body and soul** into 1 being to share His glory forever.
- H. **Slide14a SLEEPING BELIEVERS, WILL RISE 1ST**
- I. **This is their promise**. We will not arrive ahead of them.
- J. **We who are alive** - Paul includes himself in this group (**we**). Paul believed in the **imminent return** of **Jesus**, as he called us to.
- K. At this time I'll throw up **1 chart** of the Coming of the Lord.

1. **Slide14b** Explain: The 2nd Coming encompasses 1007 years (from Rapture to end of Mill).

L. **Coming for His Saints (rapture) vs. Coming with His saints.**

1. At Rapture Jesus comes **for** His saints. At 2nd Coming Jesus comes **w/His** saints.
2. At Rapture we meet Christ **in the air**. At 2nd Coming we **return w/Christ to earth**.
3. At Rapture saints are **changed**. At 2nd Coming **no change** to saints.
4. The Rapture is **imminent**. The 2nd Coming is preceded by **definite signs** & is **calculated to the day**.
5. At Rapture deals with the **saved**. At 2nd Coming deals with the **saved &unsaved**
6. At Rapture Satan is **not bound**. At 2nd Coming Satan is **bound**.
7. At Rapture the world is **not changed**. At 2nd Coming the world is **radically changed**
8. The Rapture **no one sees** Jesus. The 2nd Coming **all will see Him**.

M. **Slide15a** How will this resurrection take place? ***The Lord Himself will descend.***(16)

1. **He doesn't send someone else to pick us up at the airport, He comes to get us Himself :)**

N. **3 Sounds:** [all 3 refer to the same thing **or** 3 diff things happening simultaneously?]

1. **A cry of command** (*a loud utterance to convey an authoritative direction*, like **the cry** made by the ship's master to its rowers; or **the cry** made by a military officer to his soldiers). Jesus stood at Lazarus' grave and **shouted Lazarus come forth!**
2. **W/the voice of an archangel** (Michael).
3. **W/the sound of the trumpet of God** (could be *only believers hear*, like a dog whistle?). **Slide15b** Paul said, 1 Cor.15:51,52 ***Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet***

*will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.*

a) The Jewish people were familiar with trumpets, because trumpets were used to **declare war, to announce special times and seasons, and to gather the people for a journey.**

O. **The dead in Christ will rise first** - It doesn't matter if you're **buried** or **cremated**. Whether it takes **37 years** or **37 minutes**, your body will return to dust. (DNA)

#### IV. Slide16 **LIVING BELIEVERS (17,18) Re-READ**

A. Slide17a **LIVING BELIEVERS, WILL BE SNATCHED AWAY**

B. Here, the **living saints** are *caught up with* the **deceased saints**.

C. **Caught up** - (Gk. αρπάζω harpazo) To snatch up, to seize, to carry off by force. Latin rapturo/rapto, rapture.

1. It is used in scripture *to catch away swiftly. to seize by force. to claim for one's self. to move to a new place. to rescue from danger.*

D. **Clouds** are a regular feature of *biblical theophanies*; **the divine glory** is veiled in clouds, shines forth from them **and** retreats into them. Bruce

E. Slide17b **LIVING BELIEVERS, WILL BE REUNITED W/THE SLEEPING BEL'S**

F. **Together with them** - **death** is the great **separator**, **but JC** is the great **Reconciler**.

1. This suggests that our Lord will have **the happy ministry** of *reuniting broken families and friendships*. :)

2. We shall all be **together** as *the great family of God* & forever be w/**the Lord**.

a) So no matter where you place *the rapture*, or *the great U-turn*, we will always be together with the Lord.

G. Slide17c **LIVING BELIEVERS, WILL BE WITH HIM**

H. **And so we will always be with the Lord** – **the Place** where Christians will be, was not so important to Paul, as **the Person** w/whom they will be.

1. The entire **content** and **worth** of **heaven**, the entire *blessedness of life eternal*, is for **Paul** ... *embraced in the 1 thought of being united w/Jesus his Savior and Lord.*
- I. So, **Better Days are ahead of us** (different than, *the end of the world is coming*)
- J. **Do you feel left out, or might be left behind? Do you want to have hope?**
  1. There is a **narrow gate** ... with a **wide invitation**. (cuz only 1 way to God).
- K. Keywords: Rapture, Second coming,
- L. In the 260 chapters of the New Testament, there are 318 references to the second advent of Christ—an amazing 1 out of every 30 verses.