

# I Thes 4:13-18

## Intro:

Paul clears up some misconceptions the Thessalonians had about the afterlife and coming of the Lord.

From this passage we can infer that they may have worried that their departed loved ones would not experience the second coming and vindication of Christ Paul preached about, or if so, they would miss out on something by not being alive when Jesus returned.

Much of this larger section echoes Jesus' teaching in the Olivet Discourse

## I. What Paul wants them to know. (13-17)

### A. Paul wants them to not be discouraged on account of their ignorance (13)

#### 1. I want you to know about those who have fallen asleep (13a)

Literally, "I want you to not be ignorant" suggesting that they were ignorant and probably believing mistaken implications and conclusions because of their ignorance

Sleep is a euphemism for death- cf. Jn 11:11

#### 2. Why I want you to know this (13b-c)

##### a. So that you will not be sorrowful and depressed (13b)

##### b. like those who have no hope (13c)

Greek view of the afterlife different- Jewish view developed over time- We are not sure what the Thessalonians believed about the afterlife. Many worldviews offer nothing to look forward to after this life, there is no hope to be had outside of Christ.

### B. The things Paul wants them to know (14-17)

#### 1. Your departed loved ones will take part in the resurrection (14)

##### a. If we believe that God has raised up Jesus (14a-c)

###### 1) We believe these things (14a)

###### 2) What God has done (14b-c)

###### a) Jesus died (14b)

###### b) Jesus rose (14c)

##### b. In the very same way, God will bring those who sleep in Jesus with Him into the fullness of eternal life. (14d)

#### 2. Your departed loved ones will not take a secondary role when it comes to the final events. (15-17)

##### a. I have a word of the Lord to tell you (15a)

Not sure what "word of the Lord" referred to- possibly a private revelation to Paul.

Possibly a saying of Jesus not recorded anywhere else. Possibly a loose expanded paraphrase of some things Jesus said-

cf. Mt 24:30-31 "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

b. They will take part equally with us in these events. (15b-17)

1) We who are living and remaining at the appearing of the Lord will certainly not have priority over those who are asleep (15b)

The Thessalonians thought the dead would miss out on something, but Paul refers to those living as the ones left behind

2) Paul elaborates on the coming events to show that this is so. (16-17)

a) Christ will come to take us to Him (16-17a)

(1) First those who are dead (16)

(a) The Lord will come down from heaven (16a)

((1)) With a shout of command

Jn 5:28, "...for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out."

Shout of command, military word- Jesus returns as a conqueror

((2)) With the voice of the archangel

((3)) With the trumpet of God

Cf. I Cor 15:51-53

(b) The dead in Christ will be raised first (16b)

(2) Then (at virtually the same time) We who are living and remaining will be caught up with them (17a)

"caught up" violent sudden action like Phillip after he spoke with the Ethiopian or Soldiers dragging Paul out of a hostile crowd

(a) in clouds

Cf. Dan 7:13 or transfiguration or ascension, promise that Jesus would return in the same way.

(b) in order to meet the Lord

"To meet" is a technical term for the official public welcome of a newly arrived dignitary.

"The ancient expression for the civic welcome of an important visitor or the triumphal entry of a new ruler into the capitol city and thus into his reign is applied to Christ."- cf. Mt 25:6- Virgins meeting bridegroom or Acts 28:15- Romans coming out to meet Paul

(c) in the air

b) The result: We will always be with the Lord (17b)

Paul's desire as well as ours is to be with Him- cf. Phil 1:23, Col 3:4

## II. What Paul wanted them to do:

Encourage one another in these words. (v. 18)

How can we encourage one another?

Regarding the dead in Christ: Jesus is coming soon- they won't miss it and they will be with Him and with us forever.

Regarding one another: Jesus is coming soon- we won't miss it and we will be with Him, with them and with one another forever.