

Jesus Is Coming.

[1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#)

1Th 4:13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

1Th 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

1Th 4:15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

1Th 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

1Th 4:17 Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

1Th 4:18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

What gets you excited? Many people get excited about sports, work, the luxuries of life, vacations, family gatherings, or retirement. For Christians the fact that Jesus is coming again should be the greatest news and the most exciting and anticipated event in our lives. Many of us anticipate marriage, job promotions, graduations, or the birth of a child, but we seldom ever think about the return of the Lord for His church. Much of the church anticipates what the world anticipates, we have lost the anticipation and excitement of knowing and expecting Jesus' return. Paul comforted the Thessalonians by instructing them on the coming of the Lord.

The doctrine of the coming of the Lord brings comfort, assurance, peace, and purpose to our lives. The Lord Jesus is coming again. The church must live by faith in the fact that Jesus is coming again. Paul declared this great hope to the church. Many churches lie dead and dormant because they have no hope or they have lost hope. May the Lord instruct us and impress on our hearts the fact that He's coming again. Are we anticipating the coming of Jesus? This text reveals some truths about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. The Coming of the Lord Is Explained.

1Th 4:13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

(A.) The Explanation Brings Enlightenment.

1Th 4:13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren,

This section of the letter was intended to inform and instruct the believers. Paul wanted the church to know the truth about those who had died in Christ. Paul wrote to straighten out some false doctrine in the church. God has given the church knowledge about the coming of the Lord because He does not want us to be ignorant.

Ignorant: (*agnoeo*) means for a person not to know through a lack of information or intelligence, or to be unknown or not to understand.

God has revealed to His people what will take place when Jesus comes again. The Thessalonians were concerned about those who had died and were afraid that they would miss out on the coming of the Lord.

“Most of the time when we as children of God are distressed and distraught it is because of spiritual ignorance, a lack of understanding of spiritual truths. We need to know what God has said if we are to live in peace, if we are to live with an awareness that God is in control and that history is moving toward a victorious climax.”

Paul understood that the infant church needed some instruction on some doctrinal issues that he did not cover in detail while he was with them. *God does not want His people spiritually ignorant or in spiritual darkness.* Paul writes to the Thessalonians so that they might receive enlightenment. In the last part of verse 13 we see:

(B.) The Explanation Brings Encouragement.

Th 4:13 ... concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

Paul tells the church to be encouraged because he has good news concerning those who have died. No one looks forward to death and the Thessalonians were worried about those believers that had died. Christians face death, but we have the Spirit of God in us to encourage us and to give us life. Paul writes to this young church to tell them that they should not grieve over the death of brothers and sisters as the world grieves.

The word asleep: in this verse refers to physical death. Paul is not referring to a soul sleep. The Bible knows nothing of soul sleep.

2Co 5:6 Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

2Co 5:7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

2Co 5:8 We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

Paul was teaching the church that those who have died in the Lord were presently with the Lord.

Psa 116:15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

We must not be overcome with sorrow because of death, but we must rejoice because the Savior has overcome death. We shouldn't sorrow over the death of a saint like the world who has no hope.

Heathen funerals during Paul's time were terrifying sights. The bereaved would refuse all comfort and cry their hearts out. Conversely, the catacombs under the city of Rome buried an estimated 3 million Christians during the Roman persecution. Inscriptions found there read: "In peace," "In Sleep," "Thou livest in God."

There is hope for the Christian. Paul told the church not to sorrow like the world that does not know God. Paul tells the church to be encouraged because those who are with Jesus will one day come again with Jesus. Those who have died in Christ will by no means miss out on the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. In verses 14-15 we see that:

II. The Coming of the Lord Is Expected.

1Th 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

1Th 4:15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

This passage of Scripture teaches the church that Jesus is indeed coming again. We must hope and trust in that fact because God said it in His word. Much of the church today is confused or apathetic and really does not expect the coming of the Lord because we don't really believe the Bible. The Bible teaches us that the Lord's coming is imminent and because of that fact we will do well to expect His coming. Though the Lord has taught us and warned us from His word, however His coming will catch many unprepared and ashamed.

When an unexpected visitor shows up at our house we are caught off guard. The house may be a mess, we may not have food and drink to welcome the person, and we may not be properly dressed. All of this may give the impression that the person is not welcome because we are not prepared for their coming. Spiritually speaking: This has happened to much of the church. We are not ready for Jesus to come again, we are not watching for Jesus to come again.

In or text Paul gives the church four great truths as to why we should expect the coming of the Lord.

(A.) There Is a Fundamental Foundation.

1Th 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again,

The fundamental foundation of the church is that Jesus died on the cross for our sins and that on the third day He rose again. If a person does not believe that then they are lost and have no hope in this world. This is a doctrine that we must be dogmatic on. Jesus died on the cross for my sins and He rose again so that I could be saved.

1Co 15:3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

1Co 15:4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

Hallelujah! That is the Gospel! Amen!

Jesus also testified to that fact on various occasions. Here is one.

Rev 1:17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

Rev 1:18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

We will never believe that Jesus is coming back for us if we have never experienced the resurrected Jesus Christ in our own lives. When a person gets saved (born again) they know that Jesus lives, you don't have to try to convince a child of God that Jesus is alive. Paul is not questioning the Thessalonians faith as he mentioned before, Paul thanked God for the faith of the Thessalonians. The "For if we believe" of verse 14 could easily be translated 'Since we believe.' Paul understood that the church believed the fact that Jesus died and rose again. As a matter of fact you cannot be a New Testament church without believing that Jesus died and rose again. Sadly, many in our world have heard the good news, but have rejected, scorned, and ridiculed the Gospel message.

During Sam Boyle's early ministry in Japan he hired a translator to assist him in preaching. The only translator he could find was a Japanese man who taught English in a nearby junior high school. The man was not a Christian but he agreed to translate Boyle's sermons. The relationship worked well until Boyle preached on the resurrection. Boyle proclaimed, 'and on the third day Jesus arose from the dead.' The translator looked at Boyle and said, 'They're never going to believe this.'

May we never assume the position of this translator, deciding who will and who will not believe the gospel! God's invitation to hear the good news extends to everyone, regardless of how we think they will respond. This is a fundamental foundation of our faith that cannot be dispensed with. The death, burial, and resurrection must always be proclaimed. Because Jesus is alive today we can expect Him to return at anytime. In the first part of verse 14 Paul gives the *fundamental foundation*. Next we see:

(B.) There Will Be a Future Restoration.

1Th 4:14 ...even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

Paul reveals some great and deep theological truths to the church in Thessalonica. We are to expect that Jesus is coming back because He died and rose again, because He says He's coming back, and we are to expect that He is bringing with Him a great host of saints. All the saints of God throughout all the church ages will come with Jesus in their spirit and be united with their new glorified bodies. Those who die in Christ will go immediately to be with the Lord in consciousness and in their spirit. At the rapture of the church all the spirits of the saints in heaven will come with Jesus and receive their new bodies from Jesus.

1Jn 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

We do not know exactly what we will be like, but we know that we shall be like Jesus. *Our new bodies will not be flesh and blood; they will not wear out, grow old, or waste away.* Amen! Praise God!

There will be a future restoration! Not a restoration of this old body, but a restoration of our spirits to our new bodies.

1Co 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

1Co 15:51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

1Co 15:52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

1Co 15:53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

1Co 15:54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

This is a great promise from the word of God that brings comfort and courage to the saints of God.

The story is told a generation ago when an old farmer brought his family to the big city for the very first time. They had never seen buildings so tall or sights so impressive. The farmer dropped his wife off at a department store and took his son with him to the bank, which was the tallest of all the buildings. As they walked into the lobby, they saw something else they had never seen before. Two steel doors opened. A rather large and elderly woman walked in, and the big doors closed behind her. The dial over the door swept to the right and then back to the left. The doors opened and a beautiful young lady came walking out. The farmer was amazed. He turned to his son and said, 'you wait right here. I'm going to get your mother and run her through that thing.'

At the rapture, we will be taken up. We will be transformed and will meet the Lord in the air. In verses 14-15 we've seen that there is a fundamental foundation, there will be a future restoration, next we see:

(C.) There Is a Foreseen Obligation.

1Th 4:15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord,

Paul revealed to the Thessalonians exactly what the Lord Jesus revealed to him. The Bible is inerrant, infallible, and totally true. God has an obligation to His word. Every word will be fulfilled. God will not contradict His word or pass over any of His word. The coming of the Lord is to be expected because He said so. "Paul's teaching on the Rapture was not his own speculation but direct revelation from God. The phrase this we say to you by the word of the Lord has the authoritative tone of an inspired writer revealing what God has disclosed to

him.” Jesus said that He's coming back for us so that should settle it for us. If we do not expect the Lord's return then we are calling Him a liar.

The word of God declares that Jesus is coming again. We do not know exactly when, but we do know that His coming is a fact. Don't ever listen to someone who puts a date on the coming of the Lord. Many have been deceive and led astray by following false doctrine.

Mar 13:32 But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

Mar 13:33 Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

We need to be watching for Jesus and we need to be working for Jesus. Why do we believe that Jesus is coming again? We have His word on it! In verses 14-15 there are four great truths that we must understand;

- there is a *fundamental foundation* of our faith,
- there will be a *future restoration* with our new bodies,
- there is a *foreseen obligation* to His word;

and in the last part of verse 15 we see:

(D.) There Will Be a Formal Consideration.

1Th 4:15 ...that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

God is not the author of confusion and He does everything in an orderly manner. He has a written plan of how this will take place and the rapture will take place according to His word. Paul wrote, “*that we who are alive and remain.*” Paul lived in constant expectation of Jesus return. God let Paul know what would take place, but He didn't let Paul know when they would take place.

Paul lived out his days hoping to see Jesus come for the church. Today we are called to live all our days in eager expectation and much anticipation in seeing the Lord return. Paul believed that he and his Thessalonian readers might well be alive when the Lord returned. He believed that the Rapture was imminent, that it could take place at any moment. And this truth of imminency brought comfort.”

The formal consideration is found in the fact that the Christians who are alive at the time of the Rapture will not go before those who have died. The saints that are already with Jesus will rise first and go to be with Jesus.

One preacher said, “The reason the dead rise first is because they have six feet further to go.”

Jesus is coming again for those who belong to Him. When we have a genuine expectation of Jesus return then He will not catch us off guard or apathetic. Are we living in expectation and anticipation of the return of Jesus Christ?

- In verse 13 we've learned that the coming of the Lord is explained.
- In verses 14-15 we learned that the coming of the Lord is expected.

Next we see in verses 16-18:

III. The Coming of the Lord Is Explicit.

(A.) The Descent of the Savior Is Plain.

1Th 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout,

The coming of the Lord will be explicit. That means that it will be clearly stated and clearly shown. The coming of the Lord is a definite fact. God gives a clear description of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is coming from heaven because He is in heaven. Jesus Himself is coming, He's not sending anyone else for the church, but He Himself is coming for His church. That should bless us that Jesus is coming back for us.

After the resurrection Jesus ascended into heaven at the Rapture He will descend.

Act 1:9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

Act 1:10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

Act 1:11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Jesus was taken up literally, visibly, and physically and He's coming back literally, visibly, and physically.

The Lord's descent from heaven will be plain. Paul is explaining to the Thessalonians that the Lord will make good on His promise to return for His people.

Joh 14:2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

Joh 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Jesus is also coming from heaven with a shout. Shout: (*keleusma*) means a command. It has a military sound to it. It would be like the Commander is calling His troops to fall in. "The dead saints in their resurrected bodies will join the raptured living believers in the ranks. The Lord's shout of command will be similar to His raising of Lazarus, when 'He cried out with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come forth!'" Jesus is coming with a shout! Amen! "Christ's return for His saints will be announced from heaven forcefully and dramatically."

Th 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

God will use the highest archangel to announce the next greatest event. God used angels to announce the birth of Jesus, angels were at the ascension of Jesus, and the archangel will announce the descent of Jesus for His church. The shout is a call to let everyone know what is about to take place.

Jesus is also coming back with the sound of the trumpet of God. In the Old Testament, under God's command, trumpets were used to call the princes and the congregation together, to announce the journeying of the camps, and as an alarm or notification device. Trumpets were also blown in the days of set feast and over the sacrifices made. Trumpets were also used to announce royalty. The Lord's trumpet will call all believers to join Him in the air. The trumpet of God will announce the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords. He is the bright and Morning Star. He is the Lily of the valley and the Rose of Sharon, He is the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah and His kingdom will never end.

Jesus Christ is coming back with the trumpet of God because He is royalty. The Savior's descent into the clouds will be plain and there all believers will meet the Lord. Not only will the Savior's descent be plain, but we also learn:

(B.) The Departure of the Saints Is Plain.

1Th 4:16 ...and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

1Th 4:17 Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

When all the saints are taken from the earth, it will be plain to all those who remain on the earth. Family members, friends, co-workers, and neighbor's will all be astonished at all the missing saints. All those who have died in Jesus will go with Jesus first. All the saints from every century will rise and meet the Lord in the air. ***At the coming of the Lord living saints will not die, but be transformed and then taken up.***

The Latin term for 'caught up' is *raptus*. This is the source of the popular term we use known as rapture. *Raptus*: means to catch away speedily, to seize by force, to claim for one's own self, to move to a new place, and to rescue from danger. The Greek term for 'caught up' is (*Harpazo*) this word means to carry off by force, to rescue from the danger of destruction, to claim for one's self eagerly. Here, the great Bridegroom of the church, comes from heaven to claim His Bride, the church, and take her to Himself. Finally, the word means 'to snatch out and away.' This tell us that the Rapture will occur so suddenly that it will take the church by surprise."

The Bible says that we will be caught up together with all the saints to meet the Lord Jesus in the air. "We will not only meet our Lord Jesus Christ at the Rapture, but will also be reunited with our believing friends and loved ones who have died. 'Together with them' is a great statement of encouragement. Death is the great separator, but Jesus Christ is the great Reconciler." Paul is teaching the church that when the Lord Jesus comes again we will be up and out of here.

During the Civil War a group of soldiers had to spend a winter night without tents in an open field. During the night it snowed several inches, and at dawn the chaplain reported a strange sight. The snow covered soldiers looked like the mounds of new graves, and when the bugle sounded the men immediately rose from each mound of snow, dramatically reminding the chaplain of this passage of Scripture, 'the dead in Christ shall rise first.'

We will literally meet the Lord Jesus Christ in the clouds. Meet: is a word which means 'to welcome a great person.' It refers to preparation to meet a great dignitary. We are going to meet the King of kings and Lord of lords in the clouds of glory. Jesus is coming back and we need to be ready to meet our King. We are going to meet the Lord in the air.

Air: (*aer*) it signifies the atmosphere. Why are we going to meet the Lord in the air? "Satan is called 'the prince of the power of the air.' The air, the atmosphere surrounding the earth, is the domain of Satan and his demons. Yet, when the Lord returns we are going to meet Him in the air, on Satan's home ground. This will demonstrate conclusively and without any question the total victory and domination of Jesus Christ over the forces of evil." We are going to meet the Lord on the devil's home turf. The powers of darkness have no power over our Lord. The rapture of the church will trigger Satan's final battle plan, but he will never be able to touch us, harm us, oppress us, or tempt us anymore. Amen!

Paul comforts and encourages the church in letting them know that the departure of the saints will be plain. Great words of encouragement: ***"And so shall we ever be with the Lord."*** From the rapture on there will never be a time that we are not with the Lord Jesus Christ. Where He goes we will go, what He does we will do, and when He reigns we will reign with Him. Paul encourages the church by letting them know that the descent of the Savior is plain, the departure of the saints is plain, and then Paul instructs the church in verse 18:

(C.) The Demand of the Scripture Is Plain.

1Th 4:18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Paul says we should comfort one another because of all that we know about the coming of the Lord. When the church fails to comfort and console one another with these words then we directly violate the command of Scripture. Paul commanded the church to comfort one another with these words. Paul knew how easy it would

be to be effected by the world and discouraged by the world. The church must remain focused on the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have a responsibility to comfort and challenge one another to remain faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ as we wait for Him.

Comfort: (*parakaleo*) means to call to one's side, to call to one's aid, to comfort and exhort. The word of God demands that we constantly be comforting one another. All that Paul had taught the Thessalonians about the coming of the Lord was to be a comfort to them. This is a word of encouragement and God calls for us to live with a sense of urgency, a sense of expectancy, and in complete obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The reason many are falling away and giving up on the Lord is because they have lost hope. It is our responsibility to comfort one another with the teaching of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This section of Scripture teaches us that Jesus is coming again.

- Are you ready to meet Him?
- Are you living daily like Jesus can come again?
- Would you commit your life daily to Jesus to live for Him and to look for Him?
- If Jesus came today would you be ready?
- Do others around you know that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior?

If not, then you might not be as ready to meet Him as you think. What do you need to do to make it right?