



The Anchor Of Hope In Death 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Cosmic Battle Throughout the Ages

Before time began

Lucifer

- Who he was and what he did

Ezekiel 28:12-15 You were the signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. 13 You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering... 14 You were an anointed guardian cherub. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked. 15 You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created...

- How he fell

Isaiah 14:12-15 "How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! 13 You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' 15 But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit.

Ezekiel 28:15-16 You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you. 16 In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence in your midst, and you sinned; so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God, and I destroyed you, O guardian cherub,

- Judgment passed (lightning and thunder)
 - Lightning - cast out of heaven, lost distinguished position of authority, sealed in his ultimate fate (Luke 10:18)
 - Thunder - Day of the Lord (1 Thessalonians 5)
 - History actually resides between the lightning and thunder

The Fall of Humanity

- Tempted, Adam and Eve decide who to listen to, who to obey
- God pronounces curses and provides glimmer of HOPE (*euangelion*)
Genesis 3:15 (seed of the woman, bruise heel, crush Satan's head)

Genesis 3:15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

Old Testament

- Satan working behind scenes trying to prevent the birth of the One who would crush his head
 - Empires of the Old Testament (Egypt, Babylon, Medes, Persians, Greeks, Romans - all manipulated and used by Satan to try to destroy the nation that would give birth to the promised Messiah, the one that would crush the head of Satan)

New Testament

- Satan continuing his work
 - Herod killed all the children
 - Jesus on the cross (bruised heel of Jesus - temporary)
 - Jesus in the resurrection (bruised head of Satan - fatal)
 - Strategy to wreak havoc on the Church and Israel (John 10:10, Eph 6:10-12)

Review

- Paul persecuted, arrived in Thessalonica, short visit, gospel proclaimed, example set, their faith took root and grew, faithfully endured much affliction and persecution
- Paul is concerned, months pass until arrival of Timothy, great report, letter sent out
- Last week - call to walk the line, holy living. ALL sexual immorality is sin, regardless of whatever convenient excuses we come up with. FLEE!
 - Dig in and continue to love well

1 Thessalonians 4:13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

- Paul clearly taught about the second coming of Jesus while with them (4th time mentioned - "coming of Christ")
- It's obvious they believed that Jesus would return in their lifetime (uses "we" 6 times). So when some had died between Paul's departure and Timothy's arrival the others became concerned/worried about 2 things (wonder if they died as martyrs).
 - That they had somehow missed the second coming and were experiencing the Day of the Lord because of the severe persecution they were encountering
 - That those who died before Jesus returned had missed out on that glorious event and celebration, that they were possibly going to be second class Christians

Uninformed (ignorant about a particular theological issue, improper understanding)

- So why were they uninformed? (Paul taught about the reality of the second coming, just not what happens to the dead in Christ, proly because they thought He'd return so soon)
 - Which explains why they became worried/concerned
- What we believe matters because what we think ultimately determines how we live. (Truth sets free, lies keep us in bondage)
 - Bible, Jesus, faith, grace, salvation, eschatology

Asleep (those "in Christ" that had physically died, never used to describe non-believers)

- The term "sleep" only refers to the physical body, not the soul (soul is eternal)
- Three options (dead/alive "in Christ" or NOT "in Christ")
- God's people should think and respond differently to death. Why?
 - a. Jesus conquered sin and DEATH! Death isn't the end of life...born for eternity.

Grieve as others who have no hope -

- **Definition - Hope is to live with the eager expectation and supreme confidence that what God said He will bring to pass.**
- Hope is described as the "helmet of salvation" in 1 Thess. 5:8. A helmet is able to absorb the blows against it and still allow the wearer to maintain balance and orientation, focus enough to be able to think, respond. **Protects the vital area of the mind, which is the primary target of our enemy.**
- Their ignorance caused them to live without the natural hope that should accompany a believer. They began to live like the lost world around them...without hope.

Life without hope (Does this describe you?)

- It means to live for the here and now, for the moment, that what we see around us is all there is
- It means to live with no expectation of life after death, to live with no expectation of reunion with those we love after death
- It means to live the exact opposite of what Christ commanded
- It means to live at the whims of the flesh, to pursue the lusts of the flesh, lusts of the eyes, the pride of life
- It means to live for the temporal pleasures of life
- It means to live without meaning, purpose, or value because those are only found "in Christ"
 - Not in relationships, financial security, comfort (American Dream), education, worldly success
- It means to avoid suffering and affliction because those no longer have any real purpose

- It means to gratify self at all costs because all we have to live for is this life
- **Bottom line...without hope all you do is exist, with hope you can actually live the abundant life that Jesus came to set you free to live**

1 Thessalonians 4:14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

- Paul comforts them, there's no reason to grieve like the world, dead in Christ will not be left behind, guarantee of reunion
- The God who raised Jesus from the dead is the same God who will raise Jesus' followers from the dead, those who are in Christ (God is faithful)

Jesus' death and resurrection -

- Paul connects the reality of Jesus' first advent to His still future second advent to provide assurance, guarantee
- Basis for our faith in salvation (past event)
- Basis of our hope in Jesus' return (future event)

1 Corinthians 15:17-20 And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

- Everything hinges on the resurrection! (Salvation and Future Hope)
- "BUT" - Blessed assurance - our future hope is anchored in a past event
- Jesus is the firstfruits - same God who resurrected Jesus, will raise His followers

1 Corinthians 6:14 And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.

- God is going to treat those trusting in Jesus that die the same way He treated Jesus in the resurrection

(If this letter were written to Logos and Paul corrected our understanding about those who had fallen asleep, what would we want to know next? What it'll be like when Jesus does return.)

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

Coming of the Lord

- **(how)** He will descend from heaven
 - It will be obvious and clear for everyone to see (Matt 24:27-28)

Matthew 24:27-28 "For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather."

- Lightning - "shines", its visible for everyone to see, not a hidden mystery
- Vultures - circling overhead, certainty of what's below
- **(how)** with a cry of command
 - Single call is all that is needed, presumably the call for the dead in Christ to rise, perhaps like that of Lazarus (John 11:43) "Lazarus, come out!"
 - Jesus returning (Rev 19:11-21)
- **(how)** with the voice of an archangel
 - Angels used by God to collect up His elect at the harvest (Matt 13:36-43, 16:27, 24:31)
- **(how)** with the sound of the trumpet of God
 - Trumpets used primarily to call God's people to Himself, and when it was time to go to war (Numbers 10:3, 9)

Numbers 10:3 "And when both are blown, all the congregation shall gather themselves to you at the entrance of the tent of meeting."

Numbers 10:9 "And when you go to war in your land against the adversary who oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, that you may be remembered before the LORD your God, and you shall be saved from your enemies."

- **Notice the timing, order and number of things that take place...**trumpet is blown and God's people are called (raptured) into His presence (at Coming of the Lord in 1 Thess 4:16-17) right before He goes to war against wicked mankind and to purge the earth of sin (at Day of the Lord in 1 Thess 5:1-11).
- The dead in Christ will precede the living and rise first
 - will happen in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor 15:51)
 - Those alive in Christ will immediately follow
- **But what happens in-between, between when a Christian dies and the Jesus returns?** Is it just soul sleep? (2 Cor 5:8 - absent from the body, present with the Lord)
- **But what happens with a non-Christian?** (Luke 16:19-31, Parable of Lazarus and rich man - absent from the body, immediately in a place of torment until final judgment)

1 Thessalonians 4:18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

So how should we respond?

- This correct understanding about the return of Jesus should encourage those in Christ regardless of the affliction/suffering/persecution going on around us, even in DEATH.
 - Titus calls the return of Jesus the blessed hope (Titus 2:13)
 - Peter calls it a living hope (1 Peter 1:3)
 - **It's anchored in the past, the basis of our hope for the future, and it empowers us to live in the present!**

- It should cause us to be obedient to the Great Commission of sounding the alarm of what's coming, making disciples

2 Corinthians 9:11 Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men (NKJV)

- What happens to those not in Christ?
 - Stay tuned next week for chapter 5 - Day of the Lord

In the first advent Jesus came like a lamb to be judged, at His Second Coming He will return like a roaring lion to be Judge...He came in poverty and humility, He will return with glory and great power...He came in obscurity, He will return for every eye to see...He