

## INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **1Thessalonians 4:13-18.**
- B. Many books, movies, and pamphlets have been produced that introduce fear as the primary emotion concerning the second coming of Christ. Yet, in 1Th. 4, I believe that Paul does just the opposite.
- C. The second coming is something to be understood, and actually longed for, not feared. Instead of hype we look at the word of God for help.

## I. WE HAVE GOD'S TRUTH.

- A. Scripture text: 1Th. 4:13, 15a.  
*But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope... 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord,...*
- B. One of the surest ways to relieve fear is to be informed. Paul does not want the Thessalonians to unnecessarily grieve over those who have perished before the Lord's return.
- C. Grieving is a normal reaction to the loss of a loved one. Notice that the apostle says that we may grieve, but that we are not to grieve as those do who have no hope in death.
- D. Here and in other passages Paul refers to those who are physically dead as being asleep. The wonderful thought here is that it is just as easy for God to raise the dead, as it is for us to raise someone from their sleep. With man death is a permanent, irreversible state, but with God it is but momentary and changeable.
- E. When Jesus spoke of heaven's mansions He did so in the context of assurance and trust (Jn. 14:1-2).  
*"Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you."*

## II. CHRIST IS COMING AGAIN.

- A. Scripture text: 1Th. 4:14-15.  
*For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep.*
- B. The reason that we have a great hope in death is because we believe that Jesus overcame it.
- C. Paul makes belief in the doctrine of resurrection (including X's) absolutely essential (1Cor. 15:12-18).  
*Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; 14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. 15 Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; 17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.*
- D. God will bring to heaven those who have physically died and are now asleep in Jesus.
- E. Notice also what Paul didn't say about the coming of the Lord. He does not mention signs, cataclysmic events, or special revelations. The reason for this is simple--there are none! (Mt. 24:35-36, 42-44).  
*(Mt 24:35-36) "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away. 36 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone."  
(Mt 24:42-44) "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. 43 "But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. 44 "For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will."*

## III. THE DEAD IN CHRIST WILL RISE.

- A. Scripture text: 1Th. 4:15b-16.

...that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. **16** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

- B. Paul does not deny the general resurrection of the dead (see Jn. 5:28-29), he just simply ignores it. It is not pertinent to his discussion here. All of the dead will rise on the final day. But not everyone will be caught up with the Lord in the air.

“Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, **29** and shall come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment.”

- C. There is great similarity between this passage and 1Cor. 15:50-54. From these two texts we can know the following about X’s return:

1. The Lord descends.
2. This is accompanied by a shout, the archangel, and the trumpet of God.
3. The dead in Christ rise first.
4. Those living are caught up to be with the Lord.

In 1Cor. 15:23-24, 51-54:

(**1Cor 15:23-24**) But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming, **24** then *comes* the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.

(**1Cor 15:51-54**) 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. **53** For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. **54** But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory.”

1. The Lord returns.
2. They that are Christ’s will be raised.
3. Those alive at the sound of the trumpet are changed.
4. The church is given to God.

- D. What happens now is the end of time. That is what Paul says in 1Cor. 15:24 and what Peter says in 2Pet. 3:7, 10-12.

(**2Pet 3:7**) But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

(**2Pet 3:10-12**) But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. **11** Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, **12** looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

- E. What some commentators do is make the events of 1Th. 4 and the events of 1Cor. 15 two separate things. Yet, they are not! The Bible does not speak of a rapture separate or ahead of the resurrection of the all the dead. There is no room here for a 1,000 year reign of X.

#### IV. CHRISTIANS FOREVER WITH THE LORD.

- A. Scripture text: 1Th. 4:17-18.

Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. **18** Therefore comfort one another with these words.

- B. There is no reason for panic, worry, or fear concerning the coming of Christ. Those who are living faithfully will forever be with the Lord.
- C. This section has been written to comfort us concerning those who have died before X’s return, and comfort us concerning the events that are to come to pass with the Lord returns.
- D. When Jesus comes it will be the end of all things (Mt. 25:31ff). Once the sheep have been separated from the goats (the faithful from the unfaithful), the faithful enter into the heavenly realm.

## **CONCLUSION & INVITATION.**

- A. Knowledge is power! Knowing what will happen when X returns empowers us to be spiritually ready!
- B. The Bible tells us that:
  - 1. Jesus is coming again (but no one knows when).
  - 2. That the physically dead in Christ will be raised to be with Jesus.
  - 3. Christians who are alive on the earth will be raised to be with Jesus too.
  - 4. From that point on Xians will be forever with the Lord.
- C. Faith and obedience puts on in the proper spiritual relationship with X.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.