

I Thessalonians 4:13-18

REVIEW...

- In the first 3 chapters of the Book - we are given INFORMATION about the church...
 - o Paul described the ORIGIN of the church – and the GOSPEL given to the church – chapter 1
 - o The PREACHING of Paul – and the HOPE of Paul for the church – chapter 2
 - o And then in chapter 3 the concern Paul had for the FAITH of the church...
 - o That they would abound in LOVE – BLAMELESS and HOLY at the return of Jesus Christ!
- Chapter 4 started the second section of the book – APPLICATION for the church
 - o Paul URGED them to WALK in a way that PLEASED God by giving them COMMANDS...
 - o *Parangelia* – from an angel – or we would say from a messenger...
 - o These were NOT the COMMANDS of Paul for the church – these were COMMANDS from God!
 - o Paul spends the last two chapters covering these COMMANDS...
 - o There were 3 we looked at last week – WALK in purity / WALK in love / WALK properly!

THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH... (3 THINGS)

- 1ST – DO NOT BE IGNORANT... vs. 13-15 (5 POINTS)
 - o 1st – The question... vs. 13
 - Paul did not want the brothers in Thessalonica to be ignorant...
 - Brethren – *adelphos* – this was not to just anyone – it was ONLY to believers...
 - Ignorant – *agnoeo* used 22x in NT – it simply means to NOT know or understand...
 - Apparently - some of those in the church had DIED before the Jesus returned...
 - Those that remained thought those who DIED were going to miss out on His return!
 - Interesting that many still are ignorant on this subject today...
 - We call it the RAPTURE – the return of Jesus Christ for His church...
 - One of two places in the NT that clearly clarifies this doctrine – **I Corinthians 15:51-52**
 - o 2nd – Those who have fallen asleep... vs. 13...
 - The concern was for those who had fallen asleep...
 - Fallen asleep – not referring to a nap – it is a euphemism for DEATH...
 - I love that the Bible calls death SLEEP for the believer – because it is NOT permanent!
 - **I Corinthians 5:1** – “For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens...”
 - This body we live in is not our PERMANENT home - it grows old and wears out...
 - But we know that when it is destroyed - we have a building (*a true home*) in heaven...
 - A building not made with hands - but an eternal body made by God!
 - Because our physical - sinful - corrupt bodies cannot inherit eternal life!
 - The idea is that our bodies are not who we are - any more than a tent is our home...
 - Our bodies are simply a temporary home for our eternal spirit to live in...
 - When we DIE - we CHANGE houses - and put on our eternal body!
 - Because our bodies were NOT designed to live forever - NOT meant to go to heaven...
 - But God has a new body - a MUCH better one - prepared for each one of us!
 - While in this body - we groan (*sometimes literally*) – **II Corinthians 5:4**
 - As we get old - we start to slow down / aches and pains / wrinkles and grey hair...
 - Aging is the grace of God - as we look in the mirror and see our body getting old...
 - It is how God tells us we have an EXPIRATION date...
 - If we never aged - just one day died - there would be no warning to prepare...

- We are going to see Jesus SOON - aging is one way God gets us ready!
- We get tired of this old achy body - it makes us long for the new model!
- Not that we want to die - we want to live forever...
 - When you get home from a long day of work - your clothes are dirty / stink...
 - You cannot wait to get out of those old stinky clothes - into something new!
 - In the same way we want to get out of these old stinky bodies - and get the new...
 - When we are resurrected - we will be just like Jesus when He was resurrected...
 - There will be no more pain / no more sickness / no more tears - **Revelation 21:4**
 - And this is just the LITTLE we know about our resurrected bodies...
 - FAR GREATER than anything we have now - beyond what we can imagine!
 - **I John 3:2** - "We can't even imagine what we will be like when Christ returns. But we do know that when he comes we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is."
- o 3rd – Lest you sorrow... vs. 13
 - Paul did not want the church to be ignorant – lest they sorrow...
 - The sorrow they were NOT to have – as those who have NO hope...
 - Sadly - Paul here is talking about those who DO NOT know Jesus...
 - When they die it is the END – there is no HOPE – only certain judgement!
 - The decision on where we spend our eternity is limited to our time here on earth...
 - **Hebrews 9:27** - "It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment..."
 - God does not just give us one chance – He give us a lifetime of chances!
 - But the moment we DIE our fate is sealed - there are no second chances...
 - There is no purgatory - the prayers of saints / priests / family cannot help you...
 - Either we have received Jesus and have the hope of eternity with God...
 - Or we have rejected the Gospel - and have sentenced ourselves to eternity in hell!
 - There is only ONE way to get to heaven...
 - One of the hardest things I have every had to do – is a funeral for an unbeliever...
 - There a hopelessness - an emptiness and sorrow that is overwhelming!
 - Do we believe that Jesus is the ONLY way to get to heaven – **I Timothy 2:5 / John 14:6**
 - Do we believe there is only one penalty for rejecting the Gospel – **Romans 6:23**
 - If we are CONFIDENT of those truths – then we are going to be PASSIONATE for the lost...
 - There is going to be an URGENCY to get out and share the Good News while there is time!
 - **II Corinthians 6:2** – "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."
 - But we DO NOT sorrow - **I Corinthians 15:55**
 - I remember when my Dad went home to be with the Lord...
 - He moved here to the Philippines so we could take care of him in his last days...
 - And when he FELL ASLEEP – we had several days of celebration at the church...
 - People came to comfort us – and we amazed that we were full of such JOY...
 - Not because Dad was asleep – but because he was HOME – he was with Jesus!
 - **Psalms 116:15** – "Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His saints."
- o 4th – God will bring with him those who sleep... vs. 14
 - If (since) we believe that Jesus dies and rose again...
 - Even so – likewise or in the same way – God will bring with Him those who sleep...
 - The idea being those who have died in FAITH – believing Jesus died and rose again...
 - Went to be with the Lord – and will one day come back alongside of Jesus!
 - **II Corinthians 5:8** – "To be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord."
 - While we are in this body - we are absent from the presence of the Lord...
 - But when we are leave this body - IMMEDIATELY we are in the presence of the Lord!

- When we take our last breath here on earth - we will open our eyes and see Jesus!
- We are confident of this because we walk by faith - and not by sight - **II Corinthians 5:7**
- In other words - there is nothing we can see that will prove heaven is real...
- But we can be KNOW - in spite of what we see - because we walk by faith!
- We take the time to learn the Word of God – so we are not IGNORANT about eternal life...
- We trust in the Word - and hearing the Word gives us faith - **Romans 10:17**
- o 5th – We will not proceed those who sleep... vs. 15
 - By the word of the Lord – emphasizing this was not the opinion of Paul...
 - I do not think that Paul was quoting any particular verse – perhaps a personal revelation
 - **II Corinthians 12:2** – “I know a man in Christ... caught up to the third heaven.”
 - Paul is hesitant to admit the vision he was talking about - was his own experience...
 - Likely this experience is the result of Paul being stoned to death - **Acts 14**
 - There in PARADISE Paul heard things he was forbidden to repeat...
 - The suggestion is that what Paul heard was too wonderful to put into words!
 - **I Corinthians 2:9** - “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”
 - Heaven is not the most amazing place we could imagine - beyond our imagination!
 - It will take ages - literally 1000s of years - in heaven for God to reveal it all to us!
 - **Ephesians 2:7** - “In the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”
 - All that to say - Paul had experience when it came to heaven...
 - We who are alive will not PROCEED – go to heaven before – those who have died...
 - Simply put – those who die in FAITH – are in the presence of the Lord...
 - And those of us left here on earth with either one day DIE / SLEEP and join them...
 - Or we may live to see the COMING of the LORD – the RAPTURE of the church!
- 2ND – THE RAPTURE ... vs. 16-17 (5 POINTS)
 - o 1st – The Lord will descend from heaven... vs. 16
 - This is not the DAY of the LORD – when Jesus will judge the nations...
 - When He rides out of HEAVEN on a white horse down to earth...
 - **Revelation 19:16** – “He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS...”
 - Because note that Jesus does NOT come to earth – we meet Him in the CLOUDS – vs. 17
 - Paul will address the DAY of the LORD in - **I Thessalonians 5:1-11**
 - This is the RAPTURE of the church – when we go to meet Jesus...
 - **I Corinthians 15:51-52** – “I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed - in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”
 - All of us will be changed - given a new body - but not all of us will have to die to receive it...
 - There are some who will be CHANGED - when Jesus comes for His church!
 - No one knows the exact day or hour - only the Father in heaven - **Mark 13:32**
 - Within a generation of the rebirth of the nation of Israel - May 14 - 1948 - **Mark 13:28-30**
 - Those who believe in Jesus – the church - will be snatched up into heaven...
 - It will happen in a moment (*atom*) - in the blink of an eye...
 - Millions of people all disappearing in a single moment - all over the world...
 - Nothing left behind - other than maybe a pile of clothes - just gone!
 - o 2nd – The voice of the Lord.... Vs. 16
 - His COMMAND - Jesus will come with a shout – *keleusma* only here NT – a command
 - The command will be for His SHEEP to come home – and ONLY they will hear Him...

- Those who are in the WORLD – will hear NOTHING – because they are NOT sheep!
- **John 10:27** – “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”
- His POWER - Voice (*sound*) of the Archangel (*chief angel*) 2x in NT – **Jude 1:9** (*Michael*)...
 - This is NOT as the Jehovah Witness claim – proof Jesus is Michael the Archangel...
 - He is the one who is the CHIEF over ALL the ANGELS – He is ABOVE all!
 - **Ephesians 1:21** – “Christ [is] far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named...”
- His CALL - the trump of God – the booming voice of Jesus – **Revelation 1:10**
 - **Revelation 4:1** – “A door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a TRUMPET speaking with me, saying, ‘Come up here.’”
 - **Jesus will descend from heaven and CALL all the SAINTS to come HOME!**
- o 3rd – The dead in Christ will rise first... vs. 16
 - This passage has caused some difficulties...
 - It would seem to suggest that the DEAD in Christ do not rise till the RAPTURE...
 - But that leaves the question where are they NOW if they do not rise till then...
 - People have come up with a litany of ideas to try and explain this ONE phrase...
 - But if we look at it in context the answer seems rather apparent!
 - We were told those who are ALSEEP come with the Lord – **I Thessalonians. 4:14**
 - So logically if they are already with the Lord – **I Corinthians 5:8**
 - Then the idea of them rising first is NOT sequential – like we are in line AFTAER them...
 - FIRST – *proton* used 59x in NT – just means in ORDER...
 - **Romans 1:16** – The Jews received the gospel FIRST [*proton*] – then the gentiles...
 - It does not mean they happened one right after the other – it was just the ORDER...
 - Those who are ASLEEP go to heaven FIRST when they die – then we go in the RAPTURE!
- o 4th – Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up... vs. 17
 - CAUGHT UP – *Harpazo* – to violently snatch or carry away...
 - There are those who argue the word RAPTURE is never mentioned in the Bible...
 - Which is true – in ENGLISH or ILONGGO – it comes from the Latin translation!
 - We will be caught up together with THEM...
 - **The THEM no doubt refers to those who are ASLEEP...**
 - **Those who have already died will receive their resurrected bodies FIRST...**
 - **They will come back with Jesus - to meet us in the air in the RAPTURE...**
 - **Then we who remain will be changed – metamorphoo – II Corinthians 3:18**
 - **Receive immortal bodies - I Corinthians 15:53 - and we will ALL go to heaven!**
- o 5th – When will the RAPTURE occur...
 - BEFORE the TRIBULATION...
 - Laid out in the Book of Revelation – 21 judgments in what we call the Tribulation!
 - They are broken up into 3 sets of 7 judgments – Seal / Trumpet / and Bowl judgments...
 - The terror will be so great - unless God limited it – no one would survive!
 - The good news is we will not be here for during this time of terror...
 - We will NOT be raptured at the end of the Tribulation - Post-Trib...
 - Because no man knows the day or the hour – **Matthew 25:13**
 - If we are in the Tribulation – if we count 3 ½ years from the Abomination of desolation...
 - We would know the exact day that that rapture of the church would take place!
 - We will NOT even be here for the first half of the tribulation - Mid-Trib...
 - **I Thessalonians 5:9** – tells us we as believers are not appointed to wrath...
 - Yet the Tribulation is all about the wrath of God being poured out!
 - **People hold a Mid-Trib view because of the last trumpet – I Corinthians 15:52...**

- They see this as last of the 7 trumpets blown in **Revelation 11:15**
- Believing the wrath of God only begins halfway through the Tribulation...
- But the wrath of God – the Day of the Lord – is not just the last 3 ½ years...
- The trumpet judgments come after the 7 seal judgments (*before the bowl judgements*) ...
- By the time the sixth trumpet is blown – 60% of the world has already perished!
- o 6th – We will be always with the Lord... vs. 17
 - Notice it does not say that we will ALWAYS be in HEAVEN...
 - At the end of the 7 years of Tribulation – the Day of the Lord – **Revelation 6-18**
 - Jesus will come out of Heaven on a white horse – King of Kings / Lord of Lords...
 - He will return with us – ten thousands of His saints – **Jude 1:14 / Colossians 3:4**
 - He will arrive in Jerusalem – and touch down on the Mt. of Olives - **Acts 1:11**
 - When He touches down the Mountain will split in two – **Zechariah 14:4**
 - With one word he will defeat the Antichrist and his army – **II Thessalonians 2:8!**
 - And Jesus will judge those who survived the Tribulation – **Matthew 25:31-46**
 - Then He will establish His Millennial Kingdom - **Revelation 20:1-4!**
 - AND we – the church - will rule and reign with Him for 1000 years – **I Corinthians 6:2-3**
 - Bottom line – we will be with Him ALWAYS – because we were READY!
- 3RD – THE FOURTH COMMAND - COMFORT.... vs. 18 (2 POINTS)
 - o 1st – Comfort – *parakaleō* (*present / active / imperative*) ...
 - We are commanded to DAILY COMFORT each other with these words...
 - First because we KNOW that those who are ASLEEP are with the Lord...
 - And one day we will see them again – either when we SLEEP or in the RAPTURE!
 - o 2nd – We are to DAILY CONFRONT each other with these words...
 - **I John 3:3** – “Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself...”
 - We tend to think Jesus will not come back in our lifetime – it has not happened yet...
 - But we are in the last days – Jesus could come next week – today – right now!
 - Are we ready – if Jesus came back today – what would He find in our lives...
 - This is a hugely important message – both as an encouragement and warning...
 - Jesus is coming – VERY soon – we need to be constantly prepared / ready!
 - No man knows the day and the hour – so we need to be constantly prepared!
 - **Luke 21:28** - “Stand straight and look up, for your salvation is near...”