

I Thessalonians 4: 13-15

The Coming of the Lord Part I:

HHBC





I Thessalonians chapter 4: 13-15

Today's passage

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. 14 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, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.



I Thessalonians 4:13

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1. From Vs. 9-12's exhortations on Brotherly Love & Orderly Living, Paul now moves on to the topic of the coming of Christ in the clouds:

- a) "Do not want them to be uninformed": uninformed = **agnoeō** = alpha (a negation what comes after) + **noeō** to perceive with the mind, to understand, to have understanding
- b) Therefore, 'no understanding' . . . 'no perception' . . . 'unaware' to be ignorant of
1 Cor 10:1's: *For I do not want you to be unaware (agnoeō) , brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea.*
- c) 'brethren' = ἀδελφός = **adelphos**: the brothers of phila-delphos from last week's verse 9's exhortation to 'love the adelphos'
- d) 'those who are asleep' is those who are **koimaō** has both the literal everyday meaning of sleeping and for 'death' euphemistically: Mat. 27:52: *"The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised"* (literal death). And Mat. 28:13's *"You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep."*



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2. ‘So that you will not grieve as the rest who have no hope’

- a) On background: the Thessalonians were caught off guard because within the last year to year and a half (since Paul was with them and instructing from the O.T. scriptures that Christ would come again to set up His kingdom)— some of their *delphos*, whom they had *philadelphia* for, had died.
- b) Not unlikely: perhaps a family member or two had died as well
- c) This made them leap to the conclusion that those who had died in the faith since Paul’s visit would not share in the reign of Christ on earth for the 1,000 year millennial kingdom. (H.A. Ironside)
- d) The extent of the Thessalonians knowledge- (correct but short-of-complete)- was that only the still-living saints would be able to welcome Christ upon His return, and then follow him into the Kingdom.
- e) Their dead *delphos* in the grave were in another sphere and could not welcome the King, so these Thessalonican believers thought the deceased to be shortchanged and without a living hope.
- f) ‘the rest’ is *loipos*: (adj.) others not in the group addressed, the remaining, the remnant
- g) ‘who have no hope’: hope is *elpis* – a confident expectation of good things to come, a joyful expectation
- h) The Greek pagan population (*loipos* ones) in Thessalonica: traditionally had engravings on their tombs that read: ‘*Without hope*’ and this phrase was a common funeral tiding given to the dead one’s relatives



I Thessalonians 4:14

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1. 'For if we believe Jesus died and rose again'

- a) Past point fact: that Jesus died (Aor,-Act.-Ind), he was buried and He rose to Life on the 3rd day according to the scriptures (I Cor. 15:3,4). A historical fact at a point in time.
 1. This fact is the basis for our hope [McCalley]
- b) And it's a first-class conditional statement: assumed to be true
- c) Paul had in the last year or year and a half communicated this truth to them and therefore was 100% assured they received it and had this one, simple saving knowledge

2. 'even so God will bring with Him those. . .' *Part A*

- a) *Even so*: is the 'then' (apodosis; result of) the conditional statement's first clause "If" (protasis)
- b) This clause also is key to solving the dilemma of the Parousia of Christ: "is this statement referring to the Rapture or the 2nd Coming?" question: as in the other week's class on I Thes. 3:13: '*so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints*' where Roger concluded even though this sounds like the 2nd Coming "*With His Saints*"- it is in fact the Rapture's "Coming *for* His Saints"



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2. 'even so God will bring with Him those . . .' *Part B*

- c) Could the key be: the TWO CLASSES of Saints? The living saints on earth and the present 'With Christ' Saints in Heaven?
- d) There would need to be a bifurcation of Saints, and this is in fact the case: two divisions
- e) But the Saints in Heaven are separated from their physical bodies, so that when Christ comes "**For**" the saints living on earth, He also brings a set of saints **with Him**. Those disembodied spirit/soul saints who need to be reunited with their transformed bodies to be like Him
- f) Therefore, 1 Thes. 3:13's 'coming of our Lord **with all His saints**' is the Rapture too, but it's the saints coming down, meeting their new bodies in mid-air. So 4:14 answers the uncertainty of 3:13 very clearly.

3. 'who have fallen asleep in Jesus', *Part A*

- a) 'Fallen asleep' again is our word **koimaō**; and refers regular night-time sleep or metaphorically: **death**
- b) The wonderful fact of this verse: is the two terms for death. The 1st term used in Vs. 14 is that of the Gospel message: "Jesus **died**"
- c) The 'died' that Jesus did is not **koimaō** it is **apothnēskō**: real, physical death, perishing
- d) The idea: He died so that we may live. His resurrection to life is **our** resurrection to life by identification



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3. 'who have fallen asleep in Jesus' Part B . . .

- e) And therefore, His death secured our eternal life:
- f) *'but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,'* II Tim. 1:10
- g) *Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,* Heb. 2:14
- h) Jesus said, *"Leave; for the girl has not died, but is asleep." And they began laughing at Him"* Mt. 9:24
- i) Conclusion: because of Christ's conquering Sin, Death and Hades by His work on the cross, those that believe in His work, never die. We have eternal life now. We are never referred to as 'the dead' as in Rev. 20.
- j) MORE: we 'fall asleep ***in Jesus***': 'in' = ***dia*** which can also be: 'through Jesus'; 'by Jesus'; 'by means of Jesus'. Many commentators use 'through' Jesus. This means he has the very agency of our life and He determines the length of our days by personally putting us to sleep.
- k) He puts us to sleep (simply separates us from our body for a time). Who wakes us up?
- l) Jesus: with a 'shout' or a command



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3. 'who have fallen asleep in Jesus' Part C. . .

From Wuest's 'Golden Nuggets' in the Greek Language:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death.” Jn 8:51

- In Greek the rendering is extremely strong: *“If any man keep my saying, he shall absolutely not see death, never”*
- In Greek there are 6 renderings to ‘see’: from casually looking at physically to ‘fixing your eyes upon’ to ‘the ‘see’ used here: **theōreō**: looking at it with a purpose, full contemplation, interest & purpose and full acquiescence
- Moral of this: when a person is being put to sleep **by Jesus** (I Thes. 4:14 greek rendering); as he/she is dying, he will **not look** at Death with interest and for a purpose. He will only be an indifferent spectator of Death; his eye though, will be fixed upon Jesus. Heb. 12:2: **‘Fixing our eyes** upon Jesus the author & finisher of faith’
- The terror and awfulness of death are not experienced by him, he has his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. His attention will not be focused on death, nor will he experience its bitterness *‘O Death, where is thy sting?’* I Cor. 15:55
- Jesus went the full course. He experienced the sting and bitterness and and awfulness and the terror of death as our substitute, conquered it, and wrestled back it’s sting and power by going to the grave



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2. 'who have fallen asleep in Jesus' *Part D . . .*

Peter Marshall was the Chaplain of the United States Senate, and he fatefully had a standing appointment to speak at the United States Naval Academy Chapel on Sunday, December 7, 1941. News came that Japan had bombed Pearl Harbor, and the Lord laid on his heart another message entirely from the message he had prepared for that morning.

He changed his sermon to be on the subject of death because his audience would be hundreds of young men who may now come face to face with death from that day forward.

He told the story of a family who had a little boy, who had a terminal illness, and his parents had found the courage to tell him that one day, and perhaps soon, he was going to die.

The boy took this in and accepted this, and went about his life again doing normal little boy things. After some time, one day out of the clear blue sky he asked his mother,

“Mom, what is death like?”

His mother was taken off guard by the question and the renewing of the matter, and she made a pretense of having to go into the kitchen to get something. She went in to hide her weeping from him, and to regain her composure before going out again to talk to her son.

While in the kitchen, the Lord gave her a beautiful answer.

She said,

“Son, do you remember how you played outside so hard this summer, you’d come back inside and lie down on the couch and you would fall asleep? And the next morning you’d wake up and you were in your own room all tucked into your own bed— and you didn’t remember how you had got there?”

“Well, your dad had come along after you had fallen asleep, and he picked you up in his strong arms, and he carried you upstairs to your room that we prepared for you.”

You will simply fall asleep here, and God will pick you up, and when you awake, you will be there, where God has prepared a place for you.”



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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, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

‘For this we say to you by the word of the Lord’

- Paul continues the new information from Vs. 14: that ‘God will bring those who have fallen asleep in Jesus’ with the information that the sleeping saints will not be left out of the glory of Christ’s coming
- Word about the King James: the KJV has the word **‘prevent’**: the Thessalonians who are alive at this writing would in no way ‘prevent’ the sleeping saints.... In old KJV, around the middle ages, **prevent** meant to **‘come before’**. In present day usage ‘prevent’ means to ‘stop/cause from happening’. So that alive saints will not come before the sleeping saints
- New Information because: the only reference to the Rapture in the gospels was not in Matthew, Mark or Luke. It was in John, spoken by Christ Himself:

Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in Me. In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.... Jn 14: 1-3

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Final, Lovely Thoughts to Think on:

Sleep on, beloved, sleep and take thy rest,
Lay down thy head upon thy Saviour's breast;
We love thee much, but Jesus loves thee best:
Good night!

Calm is thy slumber as an infant's sleep,
But thou shalt wake, no more to toil and weep;
Thine is a perfect rest, secure and deep:
Good night!

Until the shadows from this earth be cast,
Until He gathers in His sheaves at last,
Until the twilight gloom be overpast:
Good night!

STEM Publishing : Magazines : The Christian's Friend : 1882 : "Sleep on, beloved."

Until the Eastern glory decks the skies,
And they that sleep in Jesus shall arise;
And He shall come, but not in lowly guise:
Good night!

Until made beautiful by love divine,
Thou in the likeness of thy Lord shalt shine;
And He shall bring that golden crown of thine:
Good night!

Only "Good night," beloved, *not* farewell;
"A little while," and all His saints shall dwell
In hallowed union indivisible:
Good night!

Until we meet again before His throne,
Clothed in the spotless robe He gives His own;
Until we know Him e'en as we are known:
Good night! ANON.



For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

Final, Final Thoughts to Think on:

1 ASLEEP through Jesus, blessed sleep
From which none ever wakes to weep;
A calm and undisturbed repose,
Where powerless is the last of foes.

2 Asleep through Jesus, oh, how sweet
To be for such a slumber meet,
With holy confidence to sing
That death has lost its venom'd sting!

3 Asleep through Jesus, peaceful rest,
Whence waking we're supremely blest;
No fear, no woe shall dim the hour
That manifests the Saviour's power.

4 Asleep through Jesus: Yes, to be
From every earthly hindrance free,
While, in the consciousness of love
The spirit lives with Christ above.

333. 'Asleep Through Jesus, blessed sleep' by [Mrs. Margaret Mackay \(1802-1887\)](#); sung to 'Whitburn' by H.W. Baker 1821-1877; Long Meter.
from HYMNS FROM THE LITTLE FLOCK