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# Words of Truth

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## I Thessalonians 4:13-18

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*“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. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 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. 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: 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).*

What we are going to look at in this study was written to help the saints in Thessalonica understand what happens to those which were asleep. The Greek word translated “asleep” is “κοιμάω” and that term is defined in this manner: “To put to sleep, that is, (passively or reflexively) to slumber; figuratively to de cease: - (be a-, fall a-, fall on) sleep, be dead” (Strong’s # 2837). As we look at these verses the context is clearly talking about those that had died. This is great information for us to be reminded of.

In the first century there was a Jewish sect called the Sadducees. They said there was no resurrection or spirit (Matthew 22:23 and Acts 23:8). There were also false teachers such as Hymenaeus and Philetus. They erringly taught that the resurrection had past already. That teaching overthrew the faith of some (II Timothy 2:17-18). Teachings such as those left questions that needed addressed. To think that life is over at the point of physical death leaves no hope. Christians are not hopeless like those outside of Christ.

The hope of all Christians past and present is in the promise of a future bodily resurrection (I Corinthians 15:1-58 and I Peter 1:3-9). Jesus is the resurrection and the life (John 11:25). Jesus promised this: *“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation”* (John 5:28-29).

When a person dies in the flesh, he or she is then in hades (Luke 16:19-31). Jesus serves as evidence for us that the soul of a person is not stuck in hades (Acts 2:31). Jesus is

the “firstborn from the dead” (Colossians 1:12-18). When the Apostle Paul was giving an answer before Agrippa, he said: *“That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles”* (Acts 26:23). Jesus therefore serves as the example that death will not hold anyone.

When you read about the “Judgment Day” there will be those alive on earth when Jesus comes again (Matthew 24:35-25:46). That will not prevent the dead from being risen. When Paul wrote of death to the Corinthians he implied this very truth (II Corinthians 4:12-14). What we learn from the context we are studying is that the dead in Christ will rise first and then the living will ascend afterward to meet the Lord. The clarity of what was taught needs no further explanation. It is simple and direct.

What we all have to look forward to is that Christ is coming back (I Thessalonians 1:8-10). Jesus made this promise to His disciples (John 14:1-3). When Jesus was taken up into Heaven notice what was said: *“And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 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”* (Acts 1:9-11).

Hope is the message. To the saints in Rome Paul wrote: *“And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it”* (Romans 8:23-25). Looking for Jesus is referred to as, *“looking for that blessed hope”* (Titus 2:13). The conversation [citizenship] of faithful Christians is in Heaven. The place where we look for our Lord to return from. The time in which our bodies will be changed to be made like His (Philippians 3:20-21 and I John 3:1-3). This is our hope. We [faithful saints] get to look forward to being joint-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17).

The saints in Thessalonica were told to comfort one another with the words about what will happen during the future bodily resurrection. Christians are supposed to comfort and edify one another as these saints were told shortly in the next chapter (I Thessalonians 5:11). When times get tough, the faithful can be comforted by focusing on what is to come in eternity for us (II Corinthians 4:8-5:10). For those who do not obey the Gospel and those who do not continue in faithfulness to the Lord, there is no comfort or hope to come. All they have to look forward to is indignation and wrath from God (Romans 2:8-9 and II Thessalonians 1:7-9). If you are a faithful disciple of the Lord take comfort in what is to come. If you are not, change that before it is too late.