

Lessons From I Thessalonians

The Second Coming

(I Th 4:13-18)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Evening,
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of “Lessons From I Thessalonians.”
 - a. Last week we examined “How You Ought To Live.”
 - i. **I Th 4:1** “Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more.”¹
 - b. This week we are going to look at “The Second Coming.”
 - i. **I Th 4:13-18** “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. 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. 15 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. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.”
3. Paul uses a common transition phrase of his as he moves to a very important matter here in this section.
 - a. “...we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers...”
 - i. Paul uses this terminology often at other times as well.
 1. **Ro 1:13; 11:25; I Co 10:1; 12:1; II Co 1:8; Ph 1:12; Co 2:1**
 - b. Paul transitions from dealing with personal spiritual matters of the Thessalonians to eschatological (end time) matters.
4. With this in mind let us examine what Paul thought was so important for our brethren at Thessalonica to know.

I. The Faithful Dead

- A. Paul wanted the Thessalonians to consider death from a positive position
 1. Paul referred to the dead as simply “asleep.”
 - i. This is a common term used in the Bible for the righteous dead.
 - a. This Greek word for asleep is found 18 times in the N.T.
 1. Four times it refers to someone literally asleep.
 2. The other fourteen times it is used metaphorically.
 - ii. We find this term used in the O.T. as well.
 - a. **I Ki 2:10; Ps 13:3**

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

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- B. Paul wanted to the Thessalonian brethren to find hope even in the death of their righteous brethren.
 - 1. The Thessalonians had misunderstood death it appears.
 - i. They were afraid that those that had died would “miss” Christ’s return.
 - a. Today many have misunderstood death.
 - 1. This has led people to try almost anything to live longer and longer do to their ignorance and fear.
 - i. George Melly, a British jazz musician heard a young person say one time, “Who wants to live till they’re 98, anyway?” He replied, “Why, someone of 97, of course!” (<http://goo.gl/LKGdUJ>)
 - 2. Paul wanted them to no longer misunderstand it so that they would not be like those without hope.
- C. Paul wanted the Thessalonian brethren to understand why the righteous dead would not miss Christ’s return
 - 1. They were already with God.
 - i. **I Th 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.”
 - 2. The dead were in Hades and to be specific Paradise.
 - i. We will look at this more in a moment.
- D. Thus...
 - 1. We find Paul wanting to comfort the brethren and correct their thinking concerning the brethren that had died before Christ’s return.

II. The Coming Of The Lord

- A. Paul explains to the brethren what to expect to see and hear at the second advent
 - 1. There would be no little fanfare this would be an awe inspiring event.
 - i. Jesus will descend from heaven to the clouds on high.
 - a. This will “not be a substitute or an assistant but THE LORD HIMSELF” (Notes on I Thessalonians by WVBS pg. 46)
 - ii. Jesus will shout out with command.
 - a. This word “shout” here holds the idea of shouting with authority to those under authority.
 - 1. Example: Charioteer to his horses, shipmaster to his rowers, or commander to his soldiers.
 - iii. Jesus will shout with the voice of the archangel and sound like the trumpet of God.
 - a. The idea here is that at the Second Advent Jesus will shout out with a might, a loud, and a powerful sound, but to whom?
 - 1. To the dead in Christ...of course.

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2. The dead in Christ will rise first
 - i. We know that God is the one that will raise the “bodies” of the dead.
 - a. **Ro 8:11**
 - ii. We know that the body apart from the spirit is dead.
 - a. **Ja 2:26**
 - iii. We know the spirit apart from the body is in Paradise.
 - a. **Lk 23:43**
 - iv. We know Christ will bring the saints with Him at His coming.
 - a. **I Th 3:13**
 - v. We know that the physical body will be transformed into the spiritual and incorruptible at the twinkling of an eye.
 - a. **I Co 15:35-57**
 - vi. Therefore we can know that when Christ returns he will bring the souls in Paradise with Him and they will reunite with their incorruptible spiritual bodies and go up to the clouds to be with Christ.
 3. The living in Christ will follow the dead.
 - i. The living here on earth will have their physical bodies transformed and they will be caught up with Christ as well after the dead in Christ.
- B. Thus...
1. We see the hope Paul is trying to bestow our Thessalonian brethren concerning the promised return of Christ.

III. The Encouragement Of These Words

- A. Paul tells the brethren...
 1. **I Th 4:18** “Therefore encourage one another with these words.”
- B. The return of Christ and the resurrection of the dead are to be a comfort.
 1. What joy the Thessalonians could have understanding their Messiah was going to personally come down and take them back with Him.
 2. What comfort they could have understanding that each one of their spiritual family members that was faithful will be with the Lord all together one day.
- C. We need to heed the words of Paul and encourage one another
 1. We should build each other up with gracious speech.
 - i. **Ep 4:29; Ec 10:12**

CONCLUSION

1. Brethren let us make sure we exhort one another with these words as well.
 - a. Let us comfort and bring joy to each other’s lives with such knowledge.
2. Question: Are you excited about Christ’s coming back?
 - a. If so continue therein and grow thereby.
 - b. If not why not?
3. Invitation
 - a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

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- b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
- i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Have Faith In Jesus **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**