

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 – Those Who Have Fallen Asleep.

I. (13) The dead are “asleep.”

The taking away of the Church and the Second coming are among our need to know list. “Remarkably, these are areas where ignorance is still common in the Christian world.”

John 11:11 - *These things He said, and after that He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.”*

Psalm 4:8 - *I will both lie down in peace and sleep; for You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.*

Sleep and rest was a common way Jesus referred to death, and every culture or institution has a particular view or reference to death.

The dead are often mourned/celebrated with wailing, drumming, dancing, silence, flowers, a particular dress code. They are often referred to as passed on/away, expired, vegetable state, gone, breathed their last, rested their elbow, slipped, planted. After death, they’re thought of as around for a while, can be back to haunt, can get angry, sung for, exist in some form, prayed for, given food, exhumed and reburied...

For the Christian death is dead; leaving this body is like *moving* from a collapsed house into a glorious one. For these reasons, Christians should not **sorrow as others who have no hope** when their loved ones in Jesus die.

II. (14) The dead are alive.

Because of the death and resurrection of Jesus we have a powerful promise to be raised with and by Him. That’s why we do not mourn as those who have no hope.

The OT believers who died had to wait at for Christ’s resurrection as a place the Bible refers to as Abraham’s bosom. After the death of Christ, access to heaven was open to us.

2 Corinthians 5:8 - *We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.*

III. (15-16) The resurrection of the dead.

Those who are alive – **will by no means** be at a disadvantage compared to those who have gone to be the Lord already.

With a shout, the voice of an archangel and a trumpet of God (every right, authority and power) Christ will come for us. **There will be a** reunion of the buried body in the ground/cremated with their spirit that was with the LORD in heaven.

“Though the bones be scattered to the four winds of heaven, yet, at the call of the Lord God, they shall come together again, bone to his bone...” (Spurgeon)

Philippians 1:21 - *For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

IV. (17-18) Jesus picks up believers from earth.

Those alive at this coming of Jesus are instantly **caught up** to meet Jesus in the air, together with the dead in Jesus who have already risen.

We shall always be with the Lord is an important truth with many implications.

In this life we're with Christ, in death we go to be with Him and in the resurrection/glorification we shall always be with Him.

Luke 17:34-37 - *“I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. “Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. “Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left.” And they answered and said to Him, “Where, Lord?” So He said to them, “Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.”*

1Corinthians 15:50-58 - *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, 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. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord*