



1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Lesson 7

The pagan world in Paul's day had no hope of life after death. A typical inscription on a grave demonstrates this fact: "I was not. I became. I am not. I care not." The believers in Thessalonica were concerned about their loved ones who had died. They were eagerly awaiting the Lord's return. But what about believers who had already died? Would their bodies remain in the grave? Paul wanted to comfort them and assure them about their loved ones who believed and the glorious promise of the rapture. As you study these verses, may you also find great comfort and a renewed excitement of the life promised that we will be with Jesus forever.

OBSERVATION: Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they are about?
2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. We have listed below key words. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. Remember to mark any personal pronouns that refer to *God* and *Jesus*.
Key Words: God, Jesus, hope, word, believe, comfort, and the phrase coming of the Lord
3. The use of the contrasting word *but* was used in verse 13. Mark the word and record what is being contrasted.
4. The term of conclusion *therefore* was used in verse 18. Mark the word. Record the conclusion and what it was based upon.
5. What does 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 reveal about *Jesus*?

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13

1. Paul began this section of 1 Thessalonians 4 expressing his desire that they *not be ignorant*. What was the subject of his concern?
 - a. Death for the believer was often referred to as *falling asleep*. What did Paul declare in Philippians 1:23 that refutes the idea of soul sleep (our souls remaining in the ground with our bodies)?
 - 1.) Add to your understanding by recording the truths of the following verses:
 - Luke 23:43

 - Acts 7:59

 - 2 Corinthians 5:8
2. The believers in Thessalonica were waiting for the return of Christ to take those who were alive at that time to heaven. They were concerned about believers who had already *fallen asleep* (died). Why might *ignorance* regarding what happens to a believer when they die provoke *sorrow*?
3. *Sleep* is one way to describe the death of a believer. What other words would you use?
4. Notice the last phrase of this verse, *sorrow as others who have no hope*. Define the word *hope*.
 - a. What are some antonyms for the word *hope*?
 - b. What do believers have that non-believers do not have that produces in us *hope* rather than *sorrow*?
5. In what ways is the death of a loved one, who is a believer, like sending them on a long trip?

1 THESSALONIANS 4:14

1. *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again...* The word *if* would be best understood as *since*. In what ways does the resurrection of Jesus fortify your faith that believers will also not be bound to the grave?
 - a. Explain what it means to Biblically believe.
 - b. Record the awesome promise of Romans 8:11.
 - 1.) Add to this Jesus' statement in John 14:19
2. Who will Jesus *bring with Him* when He returns?
 - a. Although this is a somewhat lengthy passage, read Paul's rebuttal to those who believed there was no resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:12-19. Summarize his argument.
3. What truth does 1 Thessalonians 4:14 teach about the resurrection of the dead?

1 THESSALONIANS 4:15

1. What did Paul teach in this verse?
 - a. Upon what did Paul base this statement?
2. What does 1 Corinthians 15:51-53 teach about those who are alive when Jesus comes?
3. What do these verses teach us about the transformation of our old bodies to our new bodies?
1 Corinthians 15:42-44

Philippians 3:21
 - a. What change are you most looking forward to?

4. What truth does 1 Thessalonians 4:15 teach about:
 - those who have died *in Jesus*?

 - those who are *alive and remain until the coming of the Lord*?

5. Those who have died before *the coming of the Lord* will lack nothing that those who are alive will experience. The difference is those who have died before will have experienced actual death of the body, while those who remain will not. What shall be *brought to pass* according to 1 Corinthians 15:54,55?
 - a. In your own words, describe the real *sting of death* that no believer will have to experience.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:16-17

1. This verse begins with the words, *For the Lord Himself*. What does it mean to you to know that Jesus will not send an angel or any other messenger for you?
 - a. This is also a wonderful reminder that our Savior is a living Savior, eager to bring us to heaven to be with Him forever. Reflect upon this and share just one thought.

2. Using 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17 describe the sequence of events.

3. According to verse 16, what three sounds will we hear?

4. We get the word *rapture* from the Latin word translated as *caught up*. What do you think it will be like?
 - a. Look up the following verses and record your understanding of this word as it is used in each verse:
 - Matthew 13:19 (*snatches away*)

 - John 6:15 (*take Him by force*)

 - John 10:28 (*snatch them*)

 - Jude 1:23 (*pulling them out*)
 - b. Using the verses above, describe what will happen to believers who have remained on the earth until the *coming of the Lord*.

5. Where will the Lord be when the rapture occurs? See 1 Thessalonians 4:17.
 - a. Using 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and Zechariah 14:4, record what will be different between the rapture and the second coming of Jesus.

6. Record the glorious words of the last sentence in 1 Thessalonians 4:17.
 - a. Describe what you think eternity with Jesus will be like.

 - b. What is one of the first things you imagine doing when you get to heaven?

1 Thessalonians 4:18

1. Paul began this section in verse 13 expressing the desire that they not be ignorant about believers who had died. He ends this section, not only expecting them to be more informed, but also believing this information should be a source of *comfort* to them. If you were one of these new believers who wondered what had happened to their loved ones who died knowing Jesus, what words of *comfort* would you have for others?
 - a. What *comfort* do you personally find in these *words* when you consider the death of a believing loved one?

2. Define the word *comfort*.

3. This *comfort* does not relieve us of all mourning over the death of a believing loved one. How would you describe the *mourning* of a believer as contrasted to that of an *unbeliever*?

4. These verses not only bring *comfort* to those who have lost believing loved ones, it brings a *comfort* to us who, at this point in time, are still “remaining” on the earth. What *comfort* do these verses bring to you?
 - a. How does this *comfort* affect your daily living?

REVIEW:

1. How have you been challenged to live in the light of Christ's coming?
2. Why does a Christian not need to fear what happens to them when they die?
3. What questions has this lesson stirred up in you?
4. What answers have you discovered as you studied 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18?

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.

- 1 Corinthians 15:58

Observation Worksheet

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep 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 by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.