

I Thessalonians

Chapter 4:13-18

¹³ *But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as indeed the rest of mankind do, who have no hope.*

(MacArthur) They feared that they had missed the Rapture, since the persecution they were suffering (3:3–4) caused some to fear they were in the Day of the Lord, which they obviously had not expected to experience.

Asleep > (T.E. Wilson) *Death* has been changed to *sleep* by the work of Christ. It is an apt metaphor in which the whole concept of death is transformed. 'Christ made it the name for death in the dialect of the church (Acts 7:60)

J. B. Smith > **John 14:1-3** > *Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. ²In My Father's house are many rooms; if that were not so, I would have told you, because I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will take you to Myself, so that where I am, there you also will be.*

JOHN 14:1-3

trouble	v. 1
believe	v. 1
God, Me	v. 1
told you	v. 2
come again	v. 3
receive you	v. 3
to myself	v. 3
be where I am	v. 3

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sorrow	v. 13
believe	v. 14
Jesus, God	v. 14
say to you	v. 15
coming of the Lord	v. 15
caught up	v. 17
to meet the Lord	v. 17
ever be with the Lord	v. 17

About those who are asleep > (Robertson) Present tense gives idea of repetition, from time to time fall asleep.

(Wuest) *concerning those who from time to time are falling asleep*

Grieve > (Utley) The verb "grieve" is a present (*continued action*) passive (*Subject receiving or benefitting from the verb*) subjective (cf. Eph. 2:12). Believers must not continue to be grieved by physical death because we know the truths of the gospel.

(Phyllis' comment)

Who have no hope > (Robertson) This picture of the hopelessness of the pagan world about the future life is amply illustrated in ancient writings and particularly by inscriptions on tombs (Milligan). Some few pagans clung to this hope, but most had none.

(Constable quotes Barclay who, in turn, quotes the following)

- Aeschylus wrote, 'Once a man dies there is no resurrection.'
- Theocritus wrote, 'There is hope for those who are alive, but those who have died are without hope.'
- Catullus wrote, 'When once our brief light sets, there is one perpetual night through which we must sleep.'"

Here is our hope (Precept Austin):

- **I Peter 1:3** > ³ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*
- **Titus 2:13** > ¹³ *looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of ¹⁴our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,*
- **I Thessalonians 2:19** > ¹⁹ *For who is our hope, or joy or crown of pride, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? Or is it not indeed you?*
- **I John 3:2-3** > ² *Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope set on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

¹⁴ *For if we **believe that Jesus died** and **rose** from the dead, so also God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep **through** Jesus.*

The whole chapter of I Corinthians 15 could be studied as a companion to these verses.

Some of the key "**Rapture**" verses are:

I Thessalonians 4:13-18 > ¹³ *But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as indeed the rest of mankind do, who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose from the dead, so also God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus. ¹⁵ For we say this 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.*

¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who remain, 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, comfort one another with these words.

John 14:1-3 > "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many rooms; if that were not so, I would have told you, because I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will take you to Myself, so that where I am, there you also will be.

I Corinthians 15:51-53 > ⁵¹ Behold, I am telling you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable must put on ^[z]the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.

If > (Precept Austin) This is a (Greek grammar) which is assumed true from the author's perspective or for his literary purposes

(Wuest) *For in view of the fact that we believe that Jesus died and arose*

Believe > (Precept Austin) means to consider something to be true and therefore worthy of one's trust. To accept as true, genuine, or real.

In secular Greek literature, as well as in the New Testament, *pisteuo* (pistis, pistos) has a basic meaning of an *intellectual assent* or a belief that something is true. James described this type of faith as dead faith stating that "The devils also believe, and tremble" (Ja 2:19).

That Jesus died > (Precept Austin) Note that Paul does not say Jesus *slept* but uses the harsher word *apothnesko* - He *died*. Christians can enjoy peaceful *sleep* because Jesus became a curse for us and endured death as the penalty.

Rose > (Strong's) *anistémi* > *ana* > up, again, back ... and ... *histemi* > to stand > to stand up again

Through > (Barnes) that is, his death and resurrection are the cause of their quiet and calm repose. They do not "sleep" in paganism, or in infidelity, or in the gloom of atheism - but in the blessed hope which Jesus has imparted. They lie, as he did, in the tomb - free from pain and sorrow, and with the certainty of being raised up again.

(Wuest) *through the intermediate agency of Jesus.*

¹⁵ *For we say this 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.*

By the word of the Lord > The instance of this prophecy is not recorded in the scriptures.

We who are alive and remain > (Precept Austin) Clearly indicates Paul was living in the light of the imminent return of His Lord.

***I Corinthians 15:51-52** > ⁵¹ Behold, I am telling you a mystery; **we** will not all sleep, but **we** will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and **we** will be changed.*

Coming > (Precept Austin) *parousia* is a combination of two Greek words *para* = with, alongside + *ousia* = being which together literally mean to be alongside. *Parousia* literally means a *being beside* or a *presence*. The word denotes both an arrival and a consequent presence with. *Parousia* conveys the thought of an arrival (advent or coming) of a person to a place plus the idea of their presence at that place until a certain event transpires.

Will not precede > (Vincent) double negative - *shall in no wise precede*

¹⁶ ***For the Lord Himself** will descend from heaven with a **shout**, with the voice of ~~the~~ archangel and with the trumpet of God, and **the dead in Christ will rise first**.*

For > The Greek word usually translated as *for* is *gar* > *for, in fact, indeed*. This one is *oti* > *that, because, since*. Therefore, we could open this sentence with *Because the Lord ...*

The Lord Himself > (Utley) The Greek text emphasizes Jesus' personal return

Shout > (Strong's) a shout of command

(Barnes) The word here used does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It properly means a "cry" of excitement, or of arguing on; an outcry, clamor, or shout,

- as of sailors at the oar, Luc. Catapl. 19;
- of soldiers rushing to battle, Thuc. 3:14;
- of a multitude of people, Diod. Sic. 3:15;
- of a huntsman to his dogs, Xen. Ven. 6:20.

(Ryrie) It is a word of command used in classical Greek for the shout with which an officer gives the order to his troops or his crew.

***John 11:43** > ⁴³ And when He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"*

(Wuest) *with a Cry of command*

The > (Utley) No article appears, thus, it should read "an archangel."

(Wuest) *with an archangel's voice*

(Constable) These may be three descriptions of one event. Or they may be three separate events.

The dead in Christ will rise first > (Wiersbe) This does not mean that He will put the elements of the body together again, for resurrection is not "reconstruction." Paul argued for the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:35ff. He pointed out that the resurrection of the human body is like the growing of a plant from a seed. The flower is not the identical seed that was planted, yet there is continuity from seed to plant. Christians shall receive glorified bodies, like the glorified body of Christ (Phil. 3:20–21; 1 Cor. 15:47–58).

(Wiersbe) The Old Testament Scriptures taught this doctrine (resurrection) (Job 14:13–15; 19:23–27; Ps. 16:9–11; Dan. 12:2). The fact that Jesus arose from the dead proves that there is a resurrection.

Job 19:26-27 > *Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I will see God,
27 Whom I, on my part, shall behold for myself, and whom my eyes will see, and not another.*

Psalms 16:9-10 > *Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely. 10 For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; You will not allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.*

Daniel 12:2 > ² *And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.*

¹⁷ **Then we who are alive, who remain, 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.**

Then we who are alive, who remain > (Precept Austin) Literally this is rendered "Then we the living, the remaining."

Caught up > (Strong's) *harpazo* > to seize, catch up, snatch away

(Constable) The word in the Latin Vulgate translated "caught up" is *rapturo*, from which the term "Rapture" comes.

(Precept Austin) *Harpazo* means to take suddenly and vehemently, often with violence and speed or quickly and without warning. The idea is to take by force with a sudden swoop and usually indicates a force which cannot be resisted.

(Precept Austin) *Harpazo* is (THIS is why I love Greek grammar!)

- future passive (so called "divine passive" in this context - the action is exerted by outside divine force)
- indicative (this is the mood of certainty which describes a real event, stating that this is a future fact which we can count on!)
- first person plural (implying in context not just individuals but many individuals, specifically the true church composed of all the believers of the church age).

(Wuest) *we shall be snatched away forcibly*

Will be caught up together with them > I Corinthians 15:52 > ⁵² in a ***moment***, in the ***twinkling of an eye***, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed

Moment > (HELPS) *átomos* (from A "not" and *tomóteros*, "to cut") – properly, *not* able to cut (divide) because *too small* to be measured, like a "split second"; an "*instant*"; an *indivisible* moment of time, too short to measure" (Souter).

Twinkling of an eye > (Strong's) any rapid movement, spec. a twinkling (of lights or the eye)

Meet > (Strong's) meeting, friendly encounter

(Wuest) *a welcome-meeting*

(Precept Austin) In Greek culture the word had a technical meaning to describe the visits of dignitaries to cities where the visitor would be formally met by the citizens, or a deputation of them, who had gone out from the city for this purpose and would then be ceremonially escorted back into the city.

(Utley) This is the Greek word *apantēsis*, which is used in the sense of meeting someone and then accompanying them (cf. **Matt. 25:6**; **Acts 28:15**).

Matt. 25:6 > ⁶ *But at midnight there finally was a shout: 'Behold, the groom! Come out to meet (apantēsis) him.'*

Acts 28:15 > ¹⁵ *And from there the brothers and sisters, when they heard about us, came as far as the Market of Appius and the Three Inns to meet (apantēsis) us; and when Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.*

To meet the Lord in the air > (Walvoord) If we want to discover where believers will go after meeting Christ in the air, we can look to the parallel passage in **John 14:1-3** ...

This is further supported in the last part of the preceding chapter where Paul spoke of our being “blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints” (***1 Thessalonians 3:13***).

John 14:1-3 > *Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. ²In My Father’s house are many rooms; if that were not so, I would have told you, because I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will take you to Myself, so that where I am, there you also will be.*

1 Thessalonians 3:13 > *so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.*

¹⁸ ***Therefore, comfort one another with these words.***

(Reiter) The principal happiness of heaven is this, to be with the Lord, to see him, live with him, and enjoy him, forever. This should comfort the saints upon the death of their friends. We and they with all the saints shall meet our Lord, and be with him forever, no more to be separated either from him or from one another forever."