

Personal Study through the Bible-15 (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

By now you should have a good conceptual understanding of the basic eternal truths in first four chapters of Thessalonians. The more you read the Word of God, the more its core truths will saturate your being. Core truths that you learned, or that were enhanced, by a personal reading of 1 Thessalonians 1-4, include grasp of Paul's character and the celebration of the virtues of the Thessalonians, most notably faith, hope and love. To be sure, there needs to be some exegetical and philosophical development to unpack these concepts, but such development will never contradict the basic notions in these truths. Studies in the original Greek and philosophical realism only provide further clarification and development of these marvelous truths.

What I would like for you to do now is to make a chapter title for each of the first four chapters of this letter. The chapter title needs to be a complete, yet short, sentence and capture the essence of each chapter. This will force you to deal with its core contents, once again.

Now read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 again and fill in the following blanks.

1. Christians who have already died are said to be \_\_\_\_ (4:13). This is phenomenological language describing how the body looks when a person dies.
2. When Jesus returns at the rapture, He is going to \_\_\_\_ those with Him who have died (15)
3. When Jesus returns at the rapture, the bodies of those who have died will \_\_\_\_ first (4:16).
4. When Jesus returns at the rapture, those who are alive will be \_\_\_\_ up together with those who have died. This term is where we get the name "rapture" (16).
5. When Jesus returns at the rapture, we will all meet Him in the \_\_\_\_ (17).
6. Beginning at the rapture, we shall \_\_\_\_ be with the Lord (17).
7. The doctrine of the rapture brings \_\_\_\_ (18). It is no wonder that those who reject the rapture do not have this. Rather, they are very skeptical and often engage in mockery rather than really looking at the facts. Sounds like a cognitive believing-forming disorder to me.

8. Besides the comfort of being with the Lord forever, it is also comforting that the believer will not have to endure the tribulation, which is God's period of wrath on this earth. Note how Paul told the Thessalonians earlier that as they wait for the Lord's return, they could count on the fact that He was going to rescue them *out from* this tribulational \_\_\_ to come (1:10).
9. The rapture is a fulfillment of Christ's promise in John 14:2-3. Read this Scripture and note the connection with our Thessalonian passage. Paul was very well aware of this promise by Jesus Christ.
10. Recap of the rapture: Jesus will return (16), the dead in Christ will first be resurrected (16), then living Christians will be caught up/raptured (17), when there will be an eternal reunion of all believers and with the Lord Himself (17), and the doctrine of the rapture provides great *biblical* comfort (18).

*In 'Ehyeh,*

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