

Don Hargrove  
Faith Bible Church  
<http://www.fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

### Personal Study through the Bible-16 (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

By spending time in the first four chapters of 1 Thessalonians, you have exposed your being to the living and powerful Word of God at the core level of Truth. By doing so, you put yourself in contact with truth as such in a way that should have given you new apprehension and appreciation of the profile of the great Apostle Paul and the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. These truths are now yours and no exegesis or philosophical realism can ever change this basic conceptual understanding of these great truths from God Himself.

One may ask, “then why do the exegesis and philosophical realism?” “Because, this core level, though absolutely requisite foundationally, is not enough for real advancement in the spiritual life.” It is only the first level of understanding. You see, by grasping the basic structure of truth, you now have great insights into the value of faith, hope, love, and the need of sanctification. Isn’t that wonderful? Absolutely! It is fantastic to have this basic conceptual understanding, level one, of God’s marvelous grace that creates virtue in the believer to give him the capacity to turn from kosmos diabolicus to a living God (read 1 Thess. 1:9-10). Isn’t it marvelous to know that the plan of God for every believer is to grow in faith, hope, and love? Most assuredly! However, now try to explain faith, hope, and love. What is faith! What is hope and how does faith lead to hope, and how does hope lead to love. What is love? As wonderful, and necessary, as it is to understand the regenerative power of salvation and these fruits of virtue, you still do not know them enough to really explain them in depth. You know them on a basic intuitive level as a human being in contact with them, but without philosophical realism and exegesis you do not know them very deeply. That’s OK, at the beginning. It is OK to know them foundationally, but without exegesis and philosophical insights, you will end up distorting them as you attempt to fill in the details from your modern mindset. We need all three levels of understanding: basic conceptual structure of truth in the Word of God, exegetical analysis to develop them properly, and philosophical realism to keep us from exegeting them in a modern or personal/arbitrary framework, instead of in the framework of Prime Reality as it relates to human *beings* and ‘Ehyeh.

For this lesson, I would like for you to reread 1 Thessalonians 1:10 and 4:13-17 at least three times and reflect on the hope in its eschatology (“future things”).

1. It is fashionable in some quarters of Christianity, like liberals and even Calvinists, to downgrade prophecy (especially the rapture). One reason is that it is complex and controversial. However, what does Paul say in 1 Thess. 4:13? “But we do not want you to be foolish (ignorant), brethren.”

2. We can see clearly that in the early church of the Thessalonians, Paul did not share the viewpoint of those who downplay prophecy. Actually, we see that the rapture is the great *hope* for the church. To be ignorant of the rapture is to deprive oneself of the c\_ \_ f\_ \_ t\_ \_ g truths of the rapture (1 Thess 4:18). One cannot have real hope regarding the rapture if one is ignorant and thus skeptical about its details.
3. Note some practical aspects of the rapture in 1 Thess. 4:13, “we do not want you to be uninformed/ignorant, brethren, so that you will not g\_ \_ \_ v\_ \_ as do the rest who have no hope.”
4. All hopelessness is embodied in the expression, “no hope.” This is in dramatic contrast to the bright expectation of the Christian who is looking forward to the Lord returning at the rapture. The unbeliever has no h\_ \_ p\_ \_ at all; there is no second chance, no purgatory from which he will ever emerge acceptable to God. How many people in your life do you suspect have absolutely no hope, at least at this moment only because they are unbelievers? “No” hope, for course, means “none,” “zero,” “zilch,” “nada.” What a contrast to the believer who has a living and thriving hope, a confidence, not only regarding the rapture and being with the Lord, but in being united with Christian loved ones who have died, which the Bible describes as those who are a\_ \_ \_ \_ p (1 Thess. 4:13).
5. Note the essential reason for the believer’s regeneration and living hope in 4:14. Note how the indispensable essentials of the faith, namely the gospel of Jesus dying and rising again, is tied to the resurrection and reunification with Christian loved ones who have died. The “if” of verse 14 should be translated “since.” While Christians may differ on prophecy, all should agree on the deity of Christ and His great work on the cross and His r\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ n (14).
6. When believers die, their bodies are laid in the grave, but their souls (invisible and unextended living principles) go to be with the Lord. Read 2 Corinthians 5:8, “to be a\_ \_ \_ \_ t from the body is to be p\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ t with the Lord.”

*In ‘Ehyeh,*

*Pastor Don Hargrove*