

What is going to happen when Jesus returns? What happens to those who are alive? To those who are dead? When is this going to happen? Paul was only with the Thessalonians for three weeks, yet he felt it was important to teach eschatology - the end of the age. Then in the follow-up letters, First and Second Thessalonians, he spends much time on these topics again. What is so important? Should eschatology be just as important to us today, and if so why? Let's see what we can learn.

DAY ONE

1. Read through I Thessalonians and watch for mentions in each chapter of the coming of Jesus Christ either at the rapture when He comes for His bride or the second coming when He comes to this earth to bring judgment on Satan and his kingdom. Look for and record chapter and verse of each reference and the context in which they are set. Don't take any notes at this time, just record chapter and verse as you read through each chapter.

2. Read though these references again and answer the following questions.
 - a. I Thessalonians 1:10
 - 1) When people turn to and serve the living and true God, where will their focus be? What will they be waiting for?

 - 2) Why will they be waiting for Him? What will He do for them?

 - 3) Do you believe this refers to the rapture or His second coming? Why?

b. I Thessalonians 2:19

- 1) Why were the Thessalonians going to be their hope, joy, or crown?
- 2) How long would the believers need to remain faithful?
- 3) Do you believe this refers to the rapture or His second coming? Why?

c. I Thessalonians 3:13

- 1) What does it mean to have your heart established? Read the following verses to help answer that question. Acts 14:21-22; 16:5; Romans 1:11-12; I Peter 5:10; and II Peter 1:12.
- 2) Can anyone truly be without blame in holiness? Blameless doesn't mean sinless. Blameless means to be free from all valid charges which means that we deal with the sins in our life so that we can continue to stand in holiness with God. Read II Corinthians 7:1 and see how this applies.
- 3) Do you believe this refers to the rapture or His second coming? Why?

d. I Thessalonians 4:13-18 - We are going to skim this passage for now, but there are a couple of points you need to see.

- 1) Focus on verse 13 and verse 18. How is it possible that we will not grieve?
- 2) Do you think that this passage refers to the rapture or His second coming? Why?

4. We used the word “eschatology” in the introduction to this lesson. It is the study of end time events. What you need to do before continuing on in this lesson is to put all that you have been taught, thought, or believed to the side. As we approach our study, we want to allow the Word of God to speak to us and we don’t want the words of man to interfere with God’s message. Ask God to give you a clear, teachable mind as you continue. In I Thessalonians 4:13-18, there is a specific chain of events that are laid out before the people. Read the passage and record those events in order. Don’t add anything to what is clearly stated in the passage.

5. Now it is time to use your study tools to look up a couple of words. So using a Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, a Vine’s Expository Dictionary, a Complete Word Study New Testament, or blueletterbible.org or other helps on the computer, look up these words and record what you learn.

a) coming of (4:15)

b) caught up (4:17)

DAY TWO

What does it mean to “sleep” or be “asleep” in the Lord. This term is used three times in I Thessalonians 4:13-15. Those who are “asleep” are those who in verse 16 are called the “dead in Christ.”

1. Look up the following verses and note those who are asleep. Who are they and how does it describe them? Make sure to read these verses in context.

- a. Acts 7:60

- b. I Corinthians 11:30

- c. I Corinthians 15:16, 18

2. What happens when a Christian dies? Is this something to be feared? What part of the Christian sleeps? Where does the Christian sleep? How long does he sleep? These are all important questions. Read the following verses and record the answers to the questions that were posed.

- a. II Corinthians 5:1-8

- b. Philippians 1:21-24

3. In your own words, describe what will happen to a Christian when they die. Be thorough in your explanation. Is this something to be feared? Why or why not?

DAY THREE

Today you are going to do a chapter study on what has been called the Resurrection Chapter. It is very important to carefully observe this text and learn the vital truths of this portion of God's Word.

There are Observation Worksheets on portions of I Corinthians 15 on the next couple of pages. Prayerfully read through I Corinthians 15:12-28, 35-58 and follow all the steps of a complete chapter study. Don't miss the truths that are found in I Corinthians 15:51-54.

As you work through I Corinthians 15, keep in mind all that you have learned in I Thessalonians 4:13-18 as well as what you have learned about a Christian and death.

Record any new insights about the death of a Christian from your study on I Corinthians 15.

I Corinthians 15:12-28, 35-58

12 Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised;

14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.

15 Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised.

16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised;

17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.

18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.

21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.

22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,

24 then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.

25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.

26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

27 For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him.

28 When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.

35 But someone will say, "How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?"

36 You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies;

37 and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else.

38 But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own.

39 All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish.

40 There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another.

41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body;

43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;

44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

45 So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual.

47 The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven.

48 As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly.

49 Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.

50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

51 Behold, I tell 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 the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory.

55 O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law;

57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

DAY FOUR

Carefully and thoughtfully read through I Thessalonians 4:13-18 and I Corinthians 15:51-54 several times. Take time to meditate on these verses and then answer the following questions.

1. There are two groups of people talked about in I Thessalonians 4:13-18. Who are they?

2. Who are the ones that are going to be “caught up”?

3. How will these people, alive or asleep be “caught up”? Read I Thessalonians 4:13-18 and record step by step what will happen.

4. How and when will those who are alive and remain be “caught up”? Make sure to check both passages to answer this question.

5. Let’s take a moment to trace the steps of the Lord through I Thessalonians 4:13-18.
 - a. Where does Christ begin?
 - b. To where does He descend?
 - c. Where do the Christians meet Him?
 - d. What happens to the Christians after they meet Him?

6. In I Corinthians 15:51 says that “we shall all be changed.” Who is the “all”?

7. What will happen when they are changed and how long will this change take?

DAY FIVE

1. Our last passage for this week will be I Thessalonians 5:1-11. Read these verses carefully to see if you can discern what Paul had taught the people of Thessolonica while he was with them for three short weeks. Record your insights.
2. How does Paul describe the Christians in this passage?
3. What are the instructions given to the believers?
4. How does verse 10 relate to those who are asleep in Christ?
5. In verse 6, Paul uses the word “sleep.” Is he referring to those who are dead or something else? Explain your answer.

6. You can now go to your commentaries and read what they have to say about I Thessalonians chapter 4 and chapter 5:1-11.

7. What have you learned from your study this week that you can apply to your life?

We only have one more week in our study of I Thessalonians. What a wonderful study it has been! We will move right into Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians and the blessings of study will continue.