

I THESSALONIANS 4:13-18

VI. PAUL'S ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE THESSALONIANS (4:13-5:11)

- A. Was a Revelation concerning those who had died.
1. It was given so they wouldn't sorrow like the unsaved (13).
    - a. Some of the Thessalonian believers had apparently died since Paul was with them. Some were no doubt sorrowing because they thought their loved ones who died in Christ would not share in the blessings of the Lord's return. Consequently they were sorrowing just like those who had lost unsaved loved ones.
    - b. Paul's revelation to them about their loved ones was for this purpose - so they wouldn't sorrow like others.
  2. It pointed out to them that their loved one would be resurrected (14-16).
    - a. He said those "**who sleep in Jesus**", meaning the saved who had died, would be brought back with Christ (14). According to II Cor. 5:8 when a believer dies he is present "**with the Lord**" although his body lies in the grave. When Christ comes at the rapture those departed saints will come with Him and their souls will be reunited with their bodies.
    - b. Concerning those dead missing out, Paul said those who are alive when the Lord comes will not "**prevent**" or "**precede**" (go before) those who are dead in Christ (15). The word here is stated emphatically - they "**may never never** go first".
    - c. Concerning the order and events of this resurrection Paul is very specific:
      1. Firstly, the Lord will descend from heaven with a "**shout**" or literally "**a word of command**". His voice will be authoratative as that of an archangel and as God's trumpet signifying a great event.
      2. Secondly, when His Word of command is

given those dead in Christ shall "**stand up again**" or be resurrected.

3.Thirdly, those who are alive shall be caught up with them in the clouds(16).

3.It shared the mystery of the rapture with them (17).

- a. After the dead in Christ have been resurrected there will be a "**catching up**" of all living believers together in the clouds.
- b. This is the same truth Paul shared with the Corinthians (I Cor. 15:51:53) and will fulfill the Lord's promise given to His disciples in Jn. 14:1-3).
- c. Paul gives the purpose of this "**catching up**". It will be for a meeting with the Lord in the air.

4.It was given to comfort those whose loved ones had died in Christ (17-18).

- d. Not only would there be a resurrection of their loved ones who died in Christ but there would also be a reunion with them when the Lord comes.
- e. Note when this all takes place we will "**always be**" with the Lord. Paul said to use these words to comfort one another (18).