

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**  
**November, 2020, 2023**  
**Good Shepherd, Beaver Dam**

Death strikes often and without warning. Death came into the world because of sin. One day our body will be placed into the ground and a pastor will say, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust" over our coffin. God's Word is clear, the soul who sins is the one that will die!

We might have questions about death and the afterlife. Some of those questions will be answered today. Let us consider:

**Saints, Behold! The Sight Is Glorious!**

Before we look at what Paul says about the coming of the Lord, note how he refers to believers who had died. He called them the dead in Christ, and those who have fallen asleep. When Paul describes death as a "sleep" he isn't trying to make something bad seem better. Death is like a sleep in which a person is unaware of anything around him, but from which he awakes to use all of his abilities and senses again.

We aren't afraid to lay our head on our pillow at night and sleep. We are confident that we will wake up in the morning. We don't have to be afraid to lay our head down on the pillow of death and fall asleep, either. Jesus will wake us to a new and glorious new life.

Those who don't believe that the dead will live again find no comfort when death strikes close to them. When a loved one dies, an unbeliever might grieve in a way that shows that he/she has no hope to see that friend/relative again. Instead of finding hope in the promises of God that say the dead will live again, unbelievers find no comfort because they are looking in all the wrong places.

Grieving is not wrong. Paul says that Christians are not to grieve like unbelievers. Naturally Christians will grieve at the death of a loved one. But death is not a defeat, it is a victory! Our friends or

relatives just got to the heavenly celebration before we did!

Paul loved to teach that Jesus died and lived again, showing His power over death. If we believe that Jesus has risen from the dead, we should also believe Jesus' words, Because I live, you also will live. Jesus' resurrection and our resurrection go hand in hand.

What about the believers who are alive at the coming of the Lord? Will they have an advantage over those who are in the grave? No. Paul wrote, According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.

The second coming of the Lord will not be as humble as when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. The mighty God, who fills the universe, slept in a manger, was burped, had His diapers changed and had to be fed. However, that wondrous baby was God in human form!

When Jesus comes again, He will come in glory. The voice of the archangel will fill the air and the piercing sound of the trumpet will call the dead from their graves, All this will take place in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye as Paul wrote.

When the archangel gives the command, when the trumpet call of God ends time as we know it, the dead, the sleeping Christians, will rise to life, be united with their souls, and join the living Christians.

The reuniting of a Christian's body and soul will happen quickly. What a joyful scene that will be for believers who have been separated from loved ones by death! It will be the greatest reunion ever! The believers will be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

Why will the believers rise to meet the Lord who is coming down to us? Peter answers: The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything

in it will be laid bare. Before the destruction of the earth takes place, all believers will be safe with Jesus!

We will see the Lord! Our bodies will be glorified! We won't have any worries, we won't get sick and cannot die. We won't cry, we won't be too cold or too hot; we won't fight with anyone or have a stroke. And we won't ever get old!

We will be with the Lord. Eternal life will be awesome! And the best part is that we will see Jesus and speak to Him, and thank the One who loved us the most!

Friends, at the end of Revelation Jesus spoke, I am coming soon. It has been almost 2,000 years since Jesus said those words. When will the end of the world take place? Soon. When will believers be in heaven? Soon. But we don't know when!

It seems as though we are living in the last days. There are wars and rumors of wars; famines, earthquakes and tsunamis occur; False teachings are among us and are leading some people away from God; and basic love for others has grown cold. Jesus could be coming soon!

When Jesus does come, His return will be unexpected. When Jesus returns life will be going on as usual. The unbelievers at the time of Noah were surprised when the waters came pouring down. The unbelievers living in Sodom were surprised when fire and sulfur rained down from heaven. When Jesus returns on the last day, the unbelievers will be surprised and then horrified because they didn't listen when someone spoke to them about Jesus, their Savior.

It will be too late for last minute conversions. When Jesus comes, believers will be taken to their new home while the unbelievers will be locked up in an eternal prison.

- *Jesus is coming soon - it could be today.*
- *Pray that more people will trust Jesus as their Savior.*
- *Do all we can to spread the gospel.*

- *Keep using God's Word and Sacraments.*
- *Remain faithful!*

Those who have fallen asleep in Christ are celebrating new life with God right now. Their souls are with their Savior. They are enjoying the victory Jesus won for them! A Christian funeral is a victory celebration!

When I was young I thought I would be really old in the year 2000. I am still here. When will we be with the Lord? God's Word says, soon. Jesus has won the victory over sin, death, and hell. We know that! Jesus said that His work of saving sinful mankind was finished, completed! One day we will be with the Lord and hear the saints singing praises to our Savior who loved us most! Soon, we could hear the angels say,

**Saints, Behold! The Sight Is Glorious!**