

The Prepared Church

The Triumphant Church Series / 1 Thessalonians 4:13–15

In verse 13, we find that Paul has now arrived at the central truth of this great epistle, a thrilling and comprehensive revelation of the pretribulation rapture of the church.

Charles E. Fuller states that 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 is Paul's exposition of John 14:1-3.

Take a look at some of the similarities with me:

John 14:3 — "I will Come Again" // 1 Thess 4:16 — "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven."

John 14:3 — "I will receive you unto myself" // 1 Thess 4:17 — "Then we ... shall be caught up together ... to meet the Lord in the air."

John 14:3 — "That where I am, there ye may be also" // 1 Thess 4:17 — "so shall we ever be with the Lord."

John 14:1 — "Let not your heart be troubled" // 1 Thess 4:18 — "Wherefore comfort ye one another with these words."

What, then, does happen to those who put their faith in Christ but who die before the Lord returns? Paul reviews three things in answer to that question and helps to prepare the church for the coming pre-tribulational rapture!

1 Thessalonians 4:13-15

I. Prepared Emotionally

1 Thessalonians 4:13

A. The World's Hopelessness

Death is indeed a hopeless tragedy for those who were outside of Christ, regarding both those who die and those who are left behind to mourn.

B. The Word's Hopefulness

The only consolation we have is in the Word of God.

The soul does not sleep; the body does.

John 11:11 KJV 1900

These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

Outside of divine revelation, we have no word to comfort us when death strikes.

John 10:10 KJV 1900

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.

II. Prepared Spiritually

1 Thessalonians 4:14

A. Faith in the Risen Saviour

The *if* here is not the *if* of doubt. It actually means “since.” Then comes that grand and glorious certainty, the bedrock of all of our hope: “Jesus died and rose again.”

Acts 26:26 KJV 1900

For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

The facts concerning Jesus were public knowledge. It is the one apologetic of the faith that no unbeliever has ever been able to assail. Paul himself had seen the risen Christ.

Believing that “Jesus died and rose again” is the central truth of the gospel.

B. Future in a Risen Believer

1 Thessalonians 4:14b

Consider the use of the term “Even so!” This term suggests an exact parallel. See how Christ used this term as a parallel in John 3:14.

John 3:14 KJV 1900

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

Here is another parallel: for the Christian, dying is not to be feared any more than is sleeping.

Matthew 10:29 KJV 1900

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

III. Prepared Eternally

1 Thessalonians 4:15

A. A Sure Word

It is important that we trust the Word of the Lord

1 John 5:9 KJV 1900

If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.

We can trust the Word of the Lord, because it is not even possible for God to lie!

Hebrews 6:18 KJV 1900

That by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

Paul wrote to Titus:

Titus 1:2 KJV 1900

In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

Here, Paul offers a guarantee backed by God's own Word— "The Dead in Christ shall Rise!"

B. A Secure Future

God's integrity is beyond all question. His Word is His bond.

Conclusion

What is YOUR future? The Word of our God has remained steadfast, and unchanging. I urge you to come to the place that you can put your faith in Christ tonight.

Would you like to have the assurance of knowing that you will not have to walk through the impending tribulation that will be poured out upon this world?

God offers you that opportunity now. This is not time to wait or hesitate; instead, I urge you to put your faith in Christ now.

2 Corinthians 6:2 KJV 1900

(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.)

See God wants you to be saved. He desires for you to put your trust in Christ!

2 Peter 3:9 KJV 1900

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.