

3. What does Hebrews 2:14, 15 & 2 Tim 1:10 say about what the Lord Jesus did to death?
4. How does the truth about Christ's victory over death affect you?
5. Discuss some practical ways in which we ought to prepare for the return of King Jesus?

# The 1<sup>st</sup> Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians

## Study Four

(April 2010)



*Delhi Bible Fellowship  
Central Delhi Congregation  
Home Group Study Notes*

## THE RETURN OF THE KING

Do you know where you will end up when you finish your life here on this earth? Every religion attempts to offer some answer to this question. None, except Christianity, can say anything with certainty because they have no one who has seen life on the other side of the grave. Only the Lord Jesus has passed through death, defeated it and now is triumphant on the other side. He sits in the seat of authority and power in the heavens and will one day return to establish His rule over all creation!

### READ 1 THESSALONIANS 4:13 - 18

One of the main emphases of this letter is the return of the Lord Jesus. At the end of every chapter the apostle's make mention of Christ's return. The reason why they do this is to build hope in the Thessalonian Christians. This was a young church and so some issues quite obviously cropped up regarding life after death. Two of the issues are addressed in this section of the letter.

*First*, what happens to Christian's who die? Apparently some of the Christian's there had died and their friends and relatives were moaning for them, as if they would never see them again. Paul refers to those who have died (4:16) as being asleep (4:13, 14, 15), indicating that their physical death was not a permanent state. When a Christian dies their body goes to the grave, but their spirit is immediately taken into the presence of God (2 Cor 5:8; Phil 1:21, 23). When Christ returns their body is raised (perfect and new) and united to their spirit.

Those who have no hope (4:13) are those who do not know Jesus who Himself died and rose again. The apostles are teaching the Thessalonians that if they knew Jesus and believed in Him, which they did, then they can be certain that when the Lord returns He will bring

with Him those who are His. So they ought to live in hope that they will be united to their friends and loved ones, who are *in Christ* (4:16b), when He returns.

*Second*, will those who are dead, *in Christ*, miss out on the glorious return of the King? No they will not! In fact Paul say's that the dead, *in Christ*, will rise first. Their bodies will be raised in newness (1 Cor 15:52). Then we who are still alive will be changed (1 Cor 15:51, 52) and *caught up* to meet with Lord in the clouds. This most intimate moment of Christ meeting with His church is concealed within the clouds. Every single person who has trusted & followed the Lord Jesus throughout the ages will be raised to life and taken up out of this earth to be with the One for whom they have longed. This is the glorious rapture of the Church!

The Thessalonians ought to have been encouraged by this wonderful hope. We too need to be encouraged that death has no hold over the lives of those who trust in the Lord Jesus. In fact, death is only the threshold of eternal life. Once past, an eternity in perfect relationship with God begins!

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Do you think the people you live amongst and work with are concerned about life after death? What are their concerns?
2. What does Hebrews 2:14, 15 say about death?