

1 Thessalonians Part 3

Note:

In this teaching, the following terms are used: “new creation”, “new man” or “new self”, “Christ in You”, “holy spirit” and “gift of holy spirit”. All these terms refer to that which is received and born in a person when he or she becomes born again.

Turn to 1 Thessalonians 4

In part 2 of this teaching series on 1 Thessalonians, we learned about the responsibilities and purpose of those serving as spiritual visionaries, administrators and elders in the body of Christ. The apostle Paul, and his fellow workers fully instructed the new believers in Thessalonica regarding salvation, their functioning as believers, how to walk by the new spiritual self, how to love one another, and about our hope.

1 Thessalonians 4:1

1 Finally, then, brothers (*and sisters*), we ask and urge you (*not demand or command as a ruler*) in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more.

In this section, Paul reviews what he had taught the believers when he was personally with them and what Timothy established for them.

Remember, that as in all the other churches, believers rose up, serving as spiritual visionaries, administrators and elders. It was the responsibility of these visionaries to teach and lead by example. They are the ones who were to be at the forefront in the application of the instructions in this epistle. All the believers in Thessalonica were to continue to grow and mature spiritually. Growth brings change. This is a life where change is the norm.

As we continue on in chapter 4, we have come to a section that almost no one in the corporate religious realm believes or teaches. This section is a review of the believer's hope.

Galatians 5:5 refers to this hope:

“For through the spirit, by spiritual believing, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness”.

1 Corinthians 15:58 speaks of the impact of the knowledge of the hope of righteousness:

“Therefore, my beloved brothers (*and sisters*), be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, **knowing** that in the Lord your labor is not in vain”.

Because of the hope of righteousness, we know, (*not doubt, question, guess*) that our labor is not in vain, it's not empty, it's not without purpose, it's not without profit. Without the knowledge and understanding of the hope of righteousness, the visionary and the believers are not completely equipped for their work. This hope is necessary for endurance; it is key for our steadfastness. The believers need to be instructed in and equipped with this hope of righteousness.

Although many give lip service to the hope of righteousness, most denominations of corporate Christianity refuse to teach the hope of righteousness, mainly because they either do not know it or they cannot fit it together with their doctrines.

There are two places where you can quickly research the beliefs of the denominations. First, in

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what is called their “confessions of faith”. The other place is their funeral services.

In the “confessions of faith”, such as the “Westminster Confession”, God and Jesus Christ are defined. These are both defined in terms of the trinity. Consequently, they are ignorant about who the living and true God is, and who Jesus Christ is. They do not have a knowledge of the great mystery as recorded in the Church epistles (a short definition of this mystery is found in Ephesians chapter 3).

In these confessions and funeral services is found a profound ignorance regarding body, soul, and spirit, and what the Bible teaches about death. There is ignorance about the impact of the accomplishments of Jesus Christ, by which we have obtained justification and righteousness. Finally, they do look for Christ to return one day, but this return is for the purpose of judging the living and the dead, which includes the corporate Christians, those who adhere to these “confessions”.

What is held forth in most of Christianity today is a false, counterfeit hope and false comfort.

The hope of righteousness which is taught here in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 is part of the great mystery. In order to understand this hope of righteousness, a knowledge of the previously mentioned subjects is needed. It is no wonder that there is no accurate teaching on this subject in the majority of the corporate religious organizations of our day.

One aspect of this hope which I am endeavoring to emphasize is the reality of our identification with our Lord Jesus Christ and his accomplishments. In reality we truly are identified with our Lord and what he accomplished for us.

1 Thessalonians 4:13

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

It is God's will for His Children to be fully informed and instructed about those believers who are asleep, those who have physically died. The purpose is so that we do not grieve as others, who do not have any hope. Notice that this verse does not say that we are not to grieve. We will have grief, but we don't have to grieve to the extent as others do. A counterfeit, false hope cannot comfort and encourage as the genuine hope does.

1 Thessalonians 4:14

14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

God will bring those who have fallen asleep, those who have physically died. Some of the confessions of belief that were just mentioned discuss the immortality of the soul, that it is the soul that rises from the grave to be judged. However, verse 14 indicates that this is NOT a rising from the grave. We will have to examine some other verses to see just exactly what God is bringing with him through Jesus. Lets hold this question in abeyance as we go through this record.

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1 Thessalonians 4:15

15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord (*by revelation*), that we who are alive, who are left (*who remain*) until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise (*Greek – anistemi; make to stand up, to raise up, or to rise up, arise, rise again*) first.

We were just informed in verse 14, that God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. Now we are told that the dead in Christ will rise first. This is not an ascending from the grave – this is an awakening, a changing of those who were asleep in Christ.

1 Thessalonians 4:17

17 Then we who are alive, who are left (*who remain*), will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Turn to Colossians 3

Those of us in Christ who are alive at this event, will be caught up together with those who had fallen asleep. All of us, together, will meet the Lord in the air. We will be with him forevermore. We are to encourage one another *with these words*, because these are the words which truly encourage.

Colossians 3:1

1 If then **you have been raised with Christ**, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

3 For **you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God**.

4 When Christ **who is your life appears**, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Colossians 1:27 says that the riches of the glory of this mystery is Christ in YOU the hope of glory! This is not talking about soul life, which is the life of the flesh. The life of the flesh resides in our blood. These verses are referring to a new spiritual life, not the old life of the flesh.

So, what do we know from these verses in Colossians? We HAVE BEEN RAISED with Christ – this is an event that has already happened; it is an accomplished reality!

Next, in order to have already risen, then we must have already died; and this is indeed what is stated in verse 3. In addition, YOUR LIFE IS HIDDEN WITH CHRIST in GOD.

Finally, Christ is OUR LIFE, and we will appear with him; where? IN GLORY!

Colossians 3:9

9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices

10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Here we have the old self of the flesh, body and soul, and the new self of the spirit. The Revised

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English Bible reads as follows:

Colossians 3:9

9 Do not lie to one another, now that you have discarded the old human nature and the conduct that goes with it,

10 and have put on the new nature which is constantly being renewed in the the image of its creator and brought to know God.

Turn to Ephesians 2

Note that this renewing is not something that we are performing by works of the flesh.

Ephesians 2:8

Here are some details about our salvation:

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,

9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

We are created beings, created by God in Christ Jesus. This is NOT referring to the body and soul of the old self. In Ephesians 4, this newly created being is referred to as the new self. The flesh and blood, body and soul, the old nature is the old self.

Ephesians 4:22

22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,

23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds (*not the physical mind of the flesh*),

24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Turn to Romans 6

We are no longer identified with the flesh, the body and soul. You and I, each believer is identified with the new spiritual self, which is created by God in Christ Jesus. We, our new spiritual selves are identified with Christ and his accomplishments!

Romans 6:3

3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? (*When Christ Jesus died, we died*)

4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. (*Because he was raised from the dead, resurrected, we too can walk in newness of life. When he was raised, we were raised*)

5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

Verse 5 in the Revised English Bible reads as follows:

5 For if we have become identified with him in his death, we shall also be identified with him in his resurrection.

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Romans 6:6

6 We **know** that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

Anyone who has confessed Jesus as Lord and believes in their heart that God raised him from the dead is now saved, made whole, passed from death to life. God creates in that person a new spiritual nature, a new spiritual self which is identified with Christ and his accomplishments. When Christ Jesus died, we died; when he arose from the grave, we arose, when he ascended, we ascended, when he was seated at the right hand of God, we were seated there with him. If a believer should fall asleep, the flesh will corrupt and decay, returning to dust. The human soul, the breath life of that body returns to the air from where it came. The new spiritual self returns to God (who created it), completely asleep and unconscious. That new spiritual life, the new spiritual self cannot and will not function again until it has a new body. It is hid with Christ in God. What God has hidden, stays hidden!

Turn to 1 Corinthians 15

The believer who has fallen asleep will never ever go through a resurrection, because our resurrection has already happened. The believer is not held captive in gravedom, because our life is hid with Christ in God. On that wonderful day when Christ returns to gather us together, "...through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep".

1 Corinthians 15, verses 12 through 49 deal with the questions regarding resurrection. It has already been established that we, the born-again believers will not go through a resurrection. We are identified with Christ and his resurrection.

Verse 50 begins a section on what will happen to the believers, those who live and those who have fallen asleep.

1 Corinthians 15:50

50 I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

The body of the flesh, and its life, the soul, CANNOT inherit or possess the kingdom of God. The bodies of flesh which have died have corrupted and perished. These cannot inherit or possess that which is imperishable. The kingdom of God is spiritual, and that which is imperishable is spiritual.

1 Corinthians 15:51

51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, Those believers who remain alive when Christ returns will be changed. On that same day, those who have fallen asleep will be changed. Remember who "we" refers to. We are the new spiritual selves, created by God in Christ Jesus.

52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead (*those who have died, who are sleeping*) will be raised (*in the Greek this is the word egeiro which means 'to rouse from sleep'*) imperishable, and **we** (*remember who 'we' are*) shall be changed.

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1 Corinthians 15:53

53 For this perishable **body** must put on the imperishable, and this mortal **body** must put on immortality.

We just read that the flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The putting on of the imperishable implies the casting off and replacing of the perishable body, the physical body of the flesh which has died. The mortal, or living body of the flesh must be cast off and be replaced by the immortal body.

Notice that this is ONLY referring to the BODY being changed. Why? Because our life, the new spiritual self has been created and already exists. That new spiritual self in those who are physically alive upon the earth do not require awakening. They will be gathered together to meet the Lord in the air. Those who have fallen asleep require awakening, and will also meet the Lord in the air. All will receive new, spiritual bodies.

1 Corinthians 15:54

54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass 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** (*we did not earn the victory*) through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

This is to be the encouragement of the hope; it encourages us to stand fast and abound in the work of the Lord, because we KNOW that in the Lord our labor is not in vain.

You would think that it would be sufficient to know that we will all be saved alive and live forever with our Lord and savior. Not only are we saved alive forevermore, but the impact, the results of our works, is not in vain. Our labor in the Lord will be rewarded as well.

Lets review this last section of chapter 4

1 Thessalonians 4:13

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. **14** For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. **15** For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. **16** For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. **17** Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and **so we will always be with the Lord**. **18** Therefore encourage one another with these words.

This is the hope of righteousness.

These words are an encouragement to those who have been instructed, to those who know who

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they are and what they have become because of the accomplishments of Jesus Christ. We know that we have passed from death to life, we have a new spiritual self which God created in Christ Jesus. Whether we are awake or asleep, our lives are hidden with Christ in God. Those who sleep are not in gravedom, in the kingdom of the grave; they are asleep in Christ, and their life is hidden with Christ in God. We do not go to purgatory, hell, paradise or any other place; God has us hidden.

If we are asleep when Christ returns to gather us together, we awaken to life with a new body. The believers who are physically alive on the earth are caught up into the clouds and are changed. We all meet the Lord in the air in our new imperishable bodies, grown into full spiritual maturity, united in the spirit and united in the faith. So, we will ever be with the Lord.

We will NOT go through a period of judgment to condemnation, as we have already been justified and have received the righteousness of God.

All this is truly encouraging and effective against the grief that accompanies physical death. We do not have to grieve as others who have no hope.

1 Thessalonians 5:1

1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you.

2 For you yourselves are fully aware that the **day of the Lord** will come like a thief in the night.

Here we have just transitioned to a new subject. This new subject is “the day of the Lord”. What we read in chapter 4 verses 13 through 18 is NOT about the day of the Lord, but it is about our gathering together with him. The events in chapter 4 precede the day of the Lord.

Turn to Joel 2

The day of the Lord is not part of the great mystery. It was foretold many centuries ago by the prophets. One example is in Joel 2.

Joel 2:30

30 “And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke.

31 The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.

Turn to 1 Thessalonians 5

Paul taught the believers about the day of the Lord as well.

No one knows the times and the seasons of either event, the gathering together, or the day of the Lord, so verse 1 is completely appropriate and is in the right place. Only God knows when we will meet the Lord in the air. Only God knows when the day of the Lord will take place.

1 Thessalonians 5:3

3 While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not

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escape.

1 Thessalonians 5:4

4 But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief.

5 For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness.

We are not in darkness, we are all children of the light. We will be with the Lord when his day comes to pass.

6 So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.

Why? Because of the hope of righteousness! Our labor in the Lord is not in vain! This is not a command to keep awake out of fear, it is encouragement! We are encouraged to continue to walk in newness of life, in the new spiritual self, awake and sober.

1 Thessalonians 5:7

7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night.

8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love (*also called the breastplate of righteousness in Ephesians*), and for a helmet the hope of salvation (*this is the hope of righteousness*).

9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

10 who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might (*are able to*) live with him.

11 **Therefore** encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

Our response to our hope, to the knowledge of who we are and where we are going is to ENCOURAGE one another and build one another up. The believers of Thessalonica were great examples of this. Paul encouraged them to continue and improve.

We are not subject to wrath. In that great day of the Lord, we will be with our Lord in our new bodies, continuing to function within the body of Christ. What a great day that will be!!!

Until I had learned to manifest holy spirit, to walk in the new self of the spirit, I had no idea if this salvation or this hope was for me. Like many others, I did not really know if I was really saved or not. This is the importance of knowing about the new self of the spirit, how it functions and how it is manifested. It is available to KNOW, not doubt, not question, but KNOW that you belong to God through the accomplishments of Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:12

12 We ask you, brothers (*and sisters*), to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you,

13 and to esteem them very highly in love **because of their work**. Be at peace among yourselves.

Note what these two verses do not say. They do not say to sell out to your leaders and to blindly obey them. We have just read a whole epistle with details of how the visionaries and administrators are to be serving, what kind of example they are to be providing. They are to be respected, esteemed in love because of their WORK, NOT because of their POSITION. They EARN

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that respect and esteem – it is not given blindly or automatically.

We are all to be at peace among ourselves – that includes the visionaries and the administrators.

1 Thessalonians 5:14

14 And we urge you, brothers (*and sisters*), admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.

15 See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.

This service is all done accurately as we walk by the spirit. These are instructions for dealing with the bothers and sisters in Christ, not the unbelievers, not spiritual infestation and pollution.

1 Thessalonians 5:16

16 Rejoice always, (*it doesn't say only when you feel like it. Joy is a fruit of the spirit. Just do it*)

17 pray without ceasing,

18 give thanks in (*not for*) all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

It does not say to feel thankful, it says to give thanks regardless of the circumstances. We have so much to be thankful for! The hope of righteousness we learned about is a good place to start.

1 Thessalonians 5:19

19 Do not quench the Spirit.

This is a very important instruction. The word 'Quench' means “to put out, extinguish”, “to put out the light or fire”, “to cool”. We do not quench the operation of the spirit in ourselves or in others. We live in a world which trains the believers to quench the operation of the new spiritual self in themselves and in others. We are not to follow such training; we are to continue to walk in newness of life, in the new spiritual self.

1 Thessalonians 5:20

20 Do not despise prophecies,

21 but test everything; hold fast what is good.

22 Abstain from every form of evil.

Prophets were commonplace in the first century Church and in Thessalonica. The prophets spoke what God wanted spoken. Their words come by revelation, spiritual discernment, and are spoken by spiritual believing.

Each believer can manifest holy spirit by way of the benefit of prophecy. These words come by inspiration and will exhort, edify and comfort.

It does not say that we are to automatically believe every prophecy we hear. We don't cast these words aside, but we test them, and hold fast to what is good.

In verses 21 and 22 we have good and evil. We are enabled to recognize, discern, what is good and what is evil. The good words of prophecy, we hold fast.

We do not participate with any form of evil.

In the new spiritual self, we have the capability of spiritual discernment, so we can learn to discern, recognize good and evil, truth and error.

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1 Thessalonians 5:23

23 Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

24 He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

God is the God of peace. We have peace with God through the accomplishments of Jesus Christ. The world does not have peace because it does not accept Christ. There is no peace between us and the world.

Here we have spirit, that's the new spiritual self. The soul is the breath life of the physical body. The body is the flesh. Right now, we are a three-fold being. Paul prays by revelation, that each one of us functioning in the body of Christ in the physical world, would be completely sanctified and kept blameless until the coming of our Lord. It does not say we are to be faultless.

The body is to be subject to the soul. The soul is to be subject to the spirit. In order to walk this way and be kept blameless, we need God's help and assistance.

25 Brothers (*and sisters*), pray for us.

The great apostle Paul also has the same needs. He humbly asks for the believers prayers as well.

1 Thessalonians 5:26

26 Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss. (*this was culturally acceptable in the 1st century*)

27 I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers.

28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

This letter was to be read to all the believers. The visionaries were to teach and be examples of the application of the instructions and exhortations in this epistle.

Through the accomplishments of Jesus Christ, God has created us in Christ Jesus. We have a new nature a new self which is identified with Christ. The hope of righteousness gives us great encouragement! We know that our lives and our labor in the Lord transcend death and the grave.

1 Thessalonians 5:4

4 But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. **5** For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. **6** So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. **7** For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. **8** But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. **9** For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, **10** who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. **11** **Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.**