

Heaven - our living Hope!

Part 4

By Pastor Grant Williams

We left off in Part 3 with the story of Paul in Acts 14 and 2 Corinth 12 saying, “There is things that I saw and I can’t tell you anything about it”.

2 Corinthians 12:4 AMPC

4 Was caught up into paradise, and he heard utterances beyond the power of man to put into words, which man is not permitted to utter.

Remember, Paul did not want God’s people to worship him or the mouthpieces of God who were preaching “that was Jesus on the cross and this is what you must do to be ready for the rapture or judgment.”

But Paul, did give us this information...

1 Corinthians 2 AMPC

1 As for myself, brethren, when I came to you, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony and evidence or [a]mystery and secret of God [concerning what He has done through Christ for the salvation of men] in lofty words of eloquence or human philosophy and wisdom;

2 For I resolved to know nothing (to be acquainted with nothing, to make a display of the knowledge of nothing, and to be conscious of nothing) among you except Jesus Christ (the Messiah) and Him crucified.

3 And I was in ([b]passed into a state of) weakness and fear (dread) and great trembling [[c]after I had come] among you.

4 And my language and my message were not set forth in persuasive (enticing and plausible) words of wisdom, but they were in demonstration of the [Holy] Spirit and power [[d]a proof by the Spirit and power of God, operating on me and stirring in the minds of my hearers the most holy emotions and thus persuading them],

5 So that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men (human philosophy), but in the power of God.

6 Yet when we are among the full-grown (spiritually mature Christians who are ripe in understanding), we do impart a [higher] wisdom (the knowledge of the divine plan previously hidden); but it is indeed not a wisdom of this present age or of this world nor of the leaders and rulers of this age, who are being brought to nothing and are doomed to pass away.

7 But rather what we are setting forth is a wisdom of God once hidden [from the human understanding] and now revealed to us by God—[that wisdom] which God devised and decreed before the ages for our glorification [to lift us into the glory of His presence].

8 None of the rulers of this age or world perceived and recognized and understood this, for if they had, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But, on the contrary, as the Scripture says, What eye has not seen and ear has not heard and has not entered into the heart of man, [all that] God has prepared (made and keeps ready) for those who love Him [[e]who hold Him in affectionate reverence, promptly obeying Him and gratefully recognizing the benefits He has bestowed].

10 Yet to us God has unveiled and revealed them by and through His Spirit, for the [Holy] Spirit searches diligently, exploring and examining everything, even sounding the profound and bottomless things of God [the [f]divine counsels and things hidden and beyond man's scrutiny].

11 For what person perceives (knows and understands) what passes through a man's thoughts except the man's own spirit within him? Just so no one discerns (comes to know and comprehend) the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

12 Now we have not received the spirit [that belongs to] the world, but the [Holy] Spirit Who is from God, [given to us] that we might realize and comprehend and appreciate the gifts [of divine favor and blessing so freely and lavishly] bestowed on us by God.

13 And we are setting these truths forth in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the [Holy] Spirit, combining and interpreting spiritual truths with spiritual language [to those who possess the Holy Spirit].

14 But the natural, nonspiritual man does not accept or welcome or admit into his heart the gifts and teachings and revelations of the Spirit of God, for they are folly (meaningless nonsense) to him; and he is incapable of knowing them [of progressively recognizing, understanding, and becoming better acquainted with them] because they are spiritually discerned and estimated and appreciated.

15 But the spiritual man tries all things [he [g]examines, investigates, inquires into, questions, and discerns all things], yet is himself to be put on trial and judged by no one [he can read the meaning of everything, but no one can properly discern or appraise or get an insight into him].

16 For who has known or understood the mind (the counsels and purposes) of the Lord so as to guide and instruct Him and give Him knowledge? But we have the mind of Christ (the Messiah) and do hold the thoughts (feelings and purposes) of His heart.

How do we know God is real? By His Holy Spirit...

How do we know heaven is real? By His Holy Spirit...

Heaven and Hell are real, these are actual places and not allegory. They are not metaphors, tales or myths but the only 2 choices that you and I have regarding where we will spend eternity. It is our choice!

Many christians, church going self professing christians do not believe in a literal hell. Depending on the poll, the average of church attending christian in the United States, 71% believe in an actual heaven while 34% believe in an actual hell.

Luke 16:19-31 AMPC

19 There was a certain rich man who [habitually] clothed himself in purple and fine linen and [a]reveled and feasted and made merry in splendor every day.

20 And at his gate there [b]was [carelessly] dropped down and left a certain [c]utterly destitute man named Lazarus, [reduced to begging alms and] covered with [[d]ulcerated] sores.

21 He [eagerly] desired to be satisfied with what fell from the rich man's table; moreover, the dogs even came and licked his sores.

22 And it occurred that the man [reduced to] begging died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.

23 And **in Hades (the realm of the dead)**, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and **saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus** in his bosom.

24 And he cried out and said, **Father Abraham**, have pity and mercy on me and **send Lazarus** to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.

25 But Abraham said, Child, remember that you in your lifetime fully received [what is due you in] comforts and delights, and Lazarus in like manner the discomforts and distresses; but now he is comforted here and you are in anguish.

26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who want to pass from this [place] to you may not be able, and no one may pass from there to us.

27 And [the man] said, Then, father, I beseech you to send him to my father's house—

28 For I have five brothers—so that he may give [solemn] testimony and warn them, lest they too come into this place of torment.

29 **But Abraham said, They have Moses and the Prophets;** let them hear and listen to them.

30 But he answered, No, father Abraham, **but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent** ([e]change their minds for the better and heartily amend their ways, with abhorrence of their past sins).

31 He said to him, **If they do not hear and listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded and convinced and believe [even] if someone should rise from the dead.**

Luke 16:19-31 KJV

19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

20 *And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,*

21 *And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.*

22 *And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;*

23 *And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.*

24 *And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.*

25 *But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.*

26 *And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.*

27 *Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:*

28 *For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.*

29 *Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.*

30 *And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.*

31 *And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.*

There are Bible College professors' who claim this is allegory or a parable and they are wrong. There are pastors, preachers and teachers who think this is an allegory or a parable - they are wrong. Jesus is telling a story with actual Biblical names and not just "a certain man" or "a certain woman" which this language, certain man or certain woman is used in allegory or parables but with ambiguity.

Jesus is using the actual Biblical names of whom He is speaking about from Lazarus (not from Bethany), Moses, Abraham...When you read a parable, there is concealed meaning with the revealing of it's intent and Luke 16 is a real story and not allegory, a metaphor or a parable.

Here is a little background or history for our understanding today from the Old Testament or Old Covenant (contract) on why Jesus is sharing this story.

In the Old Covenant from the time of Adam (the first sin) when the first person died, who was Abel...

Genesis 4:8 AMPC

*8 And Cain said to his brother, [a]Let us go out to the field. And when they were in the field, **Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.***

Genesis 4:8 KJV

*8 And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, **and slew him.***

Until the time that Jesus hung on the cross and died with the believing thief next to Him...

Luke 23:39-46 AMPC

39 One of the criminals who was suspended kept up a railing at Him, saying, Are You not the Christ (the Messiah)? Rescue Yourself and us [[a]from death]!

40 But the other one reproved him, saying, Do you not even fear God, seeing you yourself are under the same sentence of condemnation and suffering the same penalty?

*41 And **we indeed suffer it justly, receiving the due reward of our actions; but this Man has done nothing out of the way [nothing [b]strange or eccentric or perverse or unreasonable].***

42 Then he said to Jesus, Lord, remember me when You come [c]in Your kingly glory!

43 And He answered him, **Truly I tell you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.**

44 It was now about the sixth hour (midday), and darkness enveloped the whole land and earth until the ninth hour (about three o'clock in the afternoon),

45 While the sun's light faded or [d]was darkened; and the curtain [of the Holy of Holies] of the temple was torn in two.

46 And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, Father, **into Your hands I commit My spirit!** And with these words, He expired.

Also at the time that Jesus died onto cross, Matthew writes something that is just incredible...

Matthew 27:50-53 AMPC

50 And Jesus cried again with a loud voice and gave up His spirit.

51 And at once the curtain of the [o]sanctuary of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; the earth shook and the rocks were split.

52 **The tombs were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep [a]in death were raised [to life];**

53 And coming out of the tombs after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

Up until the time that Jesus rose again and was seen walking the streets of Jerusalem proving once again that HE was the Messiah that was foretold in the Old Testament, fulfilling prophesy... when someone died, they would go to a chamber in the underworld called Hades.

This chamber is where the righteous and unrighteous went with the upper portion or compartment being called Abraham's Bosom, a sort of holding tank. These believers were kept in that compartment of Hades and not brought into paradise or the third heaven until Christ conquered death in His resurrection. This is where all the righteous people under the Law of Moses, the Abrahamic Covenant who were habitually obedient to God went when they died.

Why Pastors, preachers and teachers will or do not speak about heaven, hell, sin, judgment and the rapture: They don't believe it themselves and or they know the church attendees don't believe or don't want to hear it. (Paul told Timothy this would happen... Jesus said many would deceive many)

Here's a surprising finding in new research from Barna: "Half of millennial Christians say it's wrong to evangelize." Take note: these aren't millennials who merely claim a Christian affiliation but churchgoing Christians who say religion is an important part of their lives! Nearly half (47 percent) agreed with the following statement: "It is wrong to share one's personal beliefs with someone of a different faith in hopes that they will one day share the same faith." In other words, almost half of Christians in North America today in their 20s and 30s believe it's wrong to evangelize someone of a different faith.

Jesus commanded His Disciples to wait for the Promised Holy Spirit to be His witness and go make disciples. He commanded us to know the signs of His return and that part of the Holy Spirits job is to remind "us" the believer, about sin, judgment, righteousness and the things that were prophesied in the Old Testament that will coming in the future.

John 16:8-13 AMPC

8 And when He comes, He will convict and convince the world and bring demonstration to it about sin and about righteousness (uprightness of heart and right standing with God) and about judgment:

9 About sin, because they do not believe in Me [trust in, rely on, and adhere to Me];

10 About righteousness (uprightness of heart and right standing with God), because I go to My Father, and you will see Me no longer;

11 About judgment, because the ruler (evil genius, prince) of this world [Satan] is judged and condemned and sentence already is passed upon him.

12 I have still many things to say to you, but you are not able to bear them or to take them upon you or to grasp them now.

13 But when He, the Spirit of Truth (the Truth-giving Spirit) comes, He will guide you into all the Truth (the whole, full Truth). For He will not speak His own message [on His own authority]; but He will tell whatever He hears [from the Father; He will give the message that has been given to Him], and He will announce and declare to you the things that are to come [that will happen in the future].

Where is Hades? It is under the earth... there are different terms used in the Bible for heaven and/or hell: sheol, hades, gehenna, the lake of fire, paradise, and Abraham's bosom. From the Old and New Testaments and Greek and Hebrew language these terms can be very confusing.

Numbers 16 AMPC

1 Now Korah son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men,

2 And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the Israelites, 250 princes or leaders of the congregation called to the assembly, men well known and of distinction.

3 And they gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, [Enough of you!] You take too much upon yourselves, seeing that all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Why then do you lift yourselves up above the assembly of the Lord?

4 And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face.

5 And he said to Korah and all his company, In the morning the Lord will show who are His and who is holy, and will cause him to come near to Him; him whom He has chosen will He cause to come near to Him.

6 Do this: Take censers, Korah and all your company,

7 And put fire in them and put incense upon them before the Lord tomorrow; and the man whom the Lord chooses shall be holy. You take too much upon yourselves, you sons of Levi.

8 And Moses said to Korah, Hear, I pray you, you sons of Levi:

9 Does it seem but a small thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord and to stand before the congregation to minister to them,

10 And that He has brought you near to Him, and all your brethren the sons of Levi with you? Would you seek the priesthood also?

11 Therefore you and all your company are gathered together against the Lord. And Aaron, what is he that you murmur against him?

12 And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and they said, We will not come up.

13 *Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey to kill us in the wilderness, but you must also make yourself a prince over us?*

14 *Moreover, you have not brought us into a land that flows with milk and honey or given us an inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you bore out the eyes of these men? We will not come up!*

15 *And Moses was very angry and said to the Lord, Do not respect their offering! I have not taken one donkey from them, nor have I hurt one of them.*

16 *And Moses said to Korah, You and all your company be before the Lord tomorrow, you and they and Aaron.*

17 *And let every man take his censer and put incense upon it and bring before the Lord every man his censer, 250 censers; you also and Aaron, each his censer.*

18 *So they took every man his censer, and they put fire in them and laid incense upon it, and they stood at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting with Moses and Aaron.*

19 *Then Korah assembled all the congregation against Moses and Aaron before the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the Lord appeared to all the congregation.*

20 *And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron,*

21 *Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.*

22 *And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin and will You be angry with all the congregation?*

23 *And the Lord said to Moses,*

24 *Say to the congregation, Get away from around the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.*

25 *Then Moses rose up and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him.*

26 *And he said to the congregation, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest you be consumed in all their sins.*

27 So they got away from around the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And Dathan and Abiram came out and stood in the door of their tents with their wives, and their sons, and their little ones.

28 And Moses said, By this you shall know that the Lord has sent me to do all these works, for I do not act of my own accord:

29 If these men die the common death of all men or if [only] what happens to everyone happens to them, then the Lord has not sent me.

30 But if the Lord causes a new thing [to happen], and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up, with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into Sheol (the place of the dead), then you shall understand that these men have provoked (spurned, despised) the Lord!

31 As soon as he stopped speaking, the ground under the offenders split apart

32 And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their households and [Korah and] all [his] men and all their possessions.

33 They and all that belonged to them went down alive into Sheol (the place of the dead); and the earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the assembly.

34 And all Israel who were round about them fled at their cry, for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also.

35 And fire came forth from the Lord and devoured the 250 men who offered the incense.

36 And the Lord said to Moses,

37 Speak to Eleazar son of Aaron, the priest, that he take up the censers out of the burning and scatter the fire at a distance. For the censers are hallowed—

38 The censers of these men who have sinned against themselves and at the cost of their own lives. Let the censers be made into hammered plates for a covering of the altar [of burnt offering], for they were used in offering before the Lord and therefore they are sacred. They shall be a sign [of warning] to the Israelites.

39 Eleazar the priest took the bronze censers with which the Levites who were burned had offered incense, and they were hammered into broad sheets for a covering of the [brazen] altar [of burnt offering],

40 To be a memorial [a warning forever] to the Israelites, so that no outsider, that is, no one not of the descendants of Aaron, should come near to offer incense before the Lord, lest he become as Korah and as his company, as the Lord said to Eleazar through Moses.

41 But on the morrow all the congregation of the Israelites murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying, You have killed the people of the Lord.

42 When the congregation was gathered against Moses and Aaron, they looked at the Tent of Meeting, and behold, the cloud covered it and they saw the Lord's glory.

43 And Moses and Aaron came to the front of the Tent of Meeting.

44 And the Lord said to Moses,

45 Get away from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. And Moses and Aaron fell on their faces.

46 And Moses said to Aaron, Take a censer and put fire in it from off the altar and lay incense on it, and carry it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them. For there is wrath gone out from the Lord; the plague has begun!

47 So Aaron took the burning censer as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and behold, the plague was begun among the people; and he put on the incense and made atonement for the people.

48 And he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stayed.

49 Now those who died in the plague were 14,700, besides those who died in the matter of Korah.

50 And Aaron returned to Moses to the door of the Tent of Meeting, since the plague was stayed.

In the Hebrew Scriptures, the word used to describe the realm of the dead is sheol. It simply means “the place of the dead” or “the place of departed souls/spirits.” The New Testament Greek equivalent to sheol is hades, which is also a general reference to “the place of the dead.”

The Greek word gehenna is used in the New Testament for “hell” and is derived from the Hebrew word hinnom. Other passages in the New Testament indicated that sheol/hades is a temporary place where souls are kept as they await the final resurrection. The souls of the righteous, at death, go directly into the presence of God—the part of sheol called “heaven,” “paradise,” or “Abraham’s bosom” (Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23).

The lake of fire, mentioned only in Revelation 19:20 and 20:10, 14-15, is the final hell, the place of eternal punishment for all unrepentant rebels, both angelic and human (Matthew 25:41). It is described as a place of burning sulfur, and those in it experience eternal, unspeakable agony of an unrelenting nature (Luke 16:24; Mark 9:45-46). Those who have rejected Christ and are in the temporary abode of the dead in hades/sheol have the lake of fire as their final destination.

But those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life should have no fear of this terrible fate. By faith in Christ and His blood shed on the cross for our sins, we are destined to live eternally in the presence of God.

The Old Testament says when people died, they gave up the ghost. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob gave up the ghost and what “ghost” means taken from the King James 1611 translations is: they gave up their spirit.

Luke 23:45-46 AMPC

45 While the sun’s light faded or [a]was darkened; and the curtain [of the Holy of Holies] of the temple was torn in two.

*46 And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, Father, into Your hands **I commit My spirit!** And with these words, He expired.*

Luke 23:45-46 KJV

45 And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

*46 And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, **he gave up the ghost.***

In the Old Testament when you died, you were either in Covenant with God or not but you would go under the earth or the underworld in this chamber. But, when Jesus died something happened...

Ephesians 4:8-10 AMPC

8 Therefore it is said, When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive [He led a train of [a]vanquished foes] and He bestowed gifts on men.

9 [But He ascended?] Now what can this, He ascended, mean but that He had previously descended from [the heights of] heaven into [the depths], the lower parts of the earth?

10 He Who descended is the [very] same as He Who also has ascended high above all the heavens, that He [His presence] might fill all things (the whole universe, from the lowest to the highest).

When Jesus rose and ascended on high he brought those who died righteous out of that compartment into Paradise or the Third Heaven.

There is three levels of Heaven: the clouds, the stars and that which is above the stars.

Isaiah 14:12-14 KJV

12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

Isaiah 14:12-14 AMPC

12 How have you fallen from heaven, O [a]light-bringer and daystar, son of the morning! How you have been cut down to the ground, you who weakened and laid low the nations [O blasphemous, satanic king of Babylon!]

13 And you said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit upon the mount of assembly in the uttermost north.

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.

After Jesus went to the cross and rose again, those who have died habitually righteous no longer go to the center of the earth. Jesus did something during those 3 days...

Revelation 1:17-18 AMPC

17 When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as if dead. But He laid His right hand on me and said, Do not be afraid! I am the First and the Last,

*18 And the Ever-living One [I am living in the eternity of the eternities]. I died, but see, I am alive forevermore; **and I possess the keys of death and Hades (the realm of the dead).***

Revelation 1:17-18 KJV

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

*18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; **and have the keys of hell and of death.***

The keys of death and hell that Jesus took were not only the fear of or the victory over death, but the keys of death and hell indicate or reveal that Jesus is the King over death itself. As a result, we, the ones who die habitually righteous prior to the rapture of the Church no longer have to go to Hades when we die but we go up to Paradise.

When we die habitually righteous according to Luke 16, this is what happens... 2 angels give you and I a personal escort, but no longer to Hades where we would rest in Abraham's Bosom but now we are escorted directly to Paradise or the Third Heaven!

Luke 16:19-31 AMPC

22 And it occurred that the man [reduced to] begging died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.

23 And in Hades (the realm of the dead), being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24 And he cried out and said, Father Abraham, have pity and mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.

25 But Abraham said, Child, remember that you in your lifetime fully received [what is due you in] comforts and delights, and Lazarus in like manner the discomforts and distresses; but now he is comforted here and you are in anguish.

26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who want to pass from this [place] to you may not be able, and no one may pass from there to us.

It is there, in the Third Heaven where those who died habitually righteous will wait for the Rapture or Resurrection of the Church. This is where Jesus comes and brings those in Paradise with Him to meet those still remaining on the earth in the air who are living habitually righteous.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 AMPC

13 Now also we would not have you ignorant, brethren, about those who fall asleep [[a]in death], that you may not grieve [for them] as the rest do who have no hope [beyond the grave].

14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, **even so God will also bring with Him through Jesus those who have fallen asleep [[b]in death].**

15 For this we declare to you by the Lord's [own] word, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord shall in no way precede [into His presence] or have any advantage at all over those who have previously fallen asleep [in Him [c]in death].

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a loud cry of summons, with the shout of an archangel, and with the blast of the trumpet of God. And those who have departed this life in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we, the living ones who remain [on the earth], shall simultaneously be caught up along with [the resurrected dead] in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so always (through the eternity of the eternities) we shall be with the Lord!

18 Therefore comfort and encourage one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 KJV

13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, **even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.**

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 GNT

13 Our friends, we want you to know the truth about those who have died, so that you will not be sad, as are those who have no hope.

14 We believe that Jesus died and rose again, **and so we believe that God will take back with Jesus those who have died believing in him.**

15 What we are teaching you now is the Lord's teaching: we who are alive on the day the Lord comes will not go ahead of those who have died.

