



Come as you are, but don't stay that WAY!

GROWTH GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS Spring Quarter - Lesson 6 - Week of May 8, 2022

Lesson: THE RETURN OF CHRIST

Bible Verses: I Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:1-11; Philippians 1:23; Luke 16:19-31

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

- What is to be the mindset and lifestyle of believers as we wait for the Lord's coming?
- Are you looking forward to the return of Christ?
- Which of the following best describes your response to books or sermons about the end times?
 - I end up feeling nervous and anxious.
 - It irritates me the way some people get so obsessed.
 - I get excited and more motivated to live for Christ.
 - Such experiences motivate me to study the Bible more diligently.
 - I come away with more questions than answers.

DISCUSSION

KEYS TO THE TEXT:

Read I Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:1-11 NKJV.

1. The Bible speaks forcefully about the imminent return of Christ. Do most Christians live as though Christ will return?
2. Paul wrote to inform and to comfort. What reassuring or encouraging truths do you see in I Thessalonians 4:13-18?
3. What did Paul mean when he called the Thessalonians sons of light in I Thessalonians 5:5?
4. Paul spoke of the Day of the Lord. It will be the time when God pours out His fury on the wicked. Take a few minutes to read Amos 5:18-20; Zephaniah 1:14-18; 2 Peter 3:10. How is this day described?

THE CONTEXT:

The study of the end of time is the consuming passion of many in the church today. Tragically, some people get so caught up in the study of the end times that they neglect the basic principle of spiritual growth and evangelism that the coming of Jesus is designed to motivate.

Even though Paul's ministry in Thessalonica was brief, it is clear the Christians there had come to believe in the hope of the reality of their Savior's return. They were living in expectation of that coming and eagerly awaiting Christ. They knew Christ's return was the climactic event in redemptive history and did not want to miss it. The major question they had was what happens to the Christians

who die before He returns? Do they miss His return? Clearly, they had an imminent view of Christ's return, and Paul had left the impression it could happen in their lifetime. The Thessalonians' ignorance caused them to grieve. Paul's purpose in writing about the return of Christ was from a place of great concern for the church.

KEY WORDS (1 Thessalonians 4):

- **Fallen Asleep** (verse 13). This term is from the Greek word *koimao*, which can be used to describe normal sleep. But more often it refers figuratively to believers who have died and is the familiar New Testament euphemism for death, which describes the appearance of the deceased. The believers in Thessalonica had grown increasingly concerned as their fellow believers continued to die. It is important to remember that the New Testament sleep applies only to the body, never to the soul. Sleep describes the dead body, not the soul (see 2 Cor. 5:1-9; Phil. 1:23). After death, the redeemed go consciously into the presence of the Lord, while the unsaved go into conscious punishment (Luke 16:19-31).
- **God will bring with Him** (verse 14). These words describe the return of Christ, which takes place when Jesus comes to collect His redeemed and take them back to heaven. Those who have died before that time (called those who sleep) will be gathered and taken back to heaven with the Lord.
- **Caught up** (verse 17) literally means snatched away (John 10:28; Acts 8:39). This passage along with John 14:1-3 and I Cor. 15:51-52 form the biblical basis for the return of Christ.

GOING DEEPER:

Take a few moments to reflect on another passage Paul wrote about the return of Christ in I Corinthians 15:51-58.

1. What additional insight do you see in these verses about the return of Christ?
2. How do these scriptures motivate you to be steadfast in the faith?
3. How do you reconcile the facts that Christ's return will be a comfort and yet will also bring judgment?

TRUTH FOR TODAY:

As history continues to unfold the planned purposes of God, one event looms large on the horizon - the Day of the Lord.

PRAYER FOCUS:

I pray that I will receive comfort from this lesson about the return of Christ.