

**BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF ERIE**  
**James M. Duncan, Pastor**  
**NOVEMBER 1, 2020**

**SERMON SERIES**  
**GLAD THAT YOU ASKED**

**“CAN WE REALLY BELIEVE JESUS IS COMING AGAIN?”**

**I THESSALONIANS 4:13-18**

Last Sunday we examined the subject of: **Are We Living In The Last Days?** Now today I want to speak about the next event that is on God’s calendar and schedule for the Last Days and that will be the event that we call –

**The Rapture of the Church or the Second Coming Of Christ.** Remember also what Jesus Himself said about His second coming in two particularly important passage found in:

**John 14:3; Acts 1:11.** Back in 1970 Bill Gaither wrote an awesome song titled: **“The King I Coming!”** (you saw the video) and brothers and sisters that is still true today in 2020.

Let me make two important comments before we dig into

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.**

- ◆ **First, the purpose of this passage is pastoral.**
- ◆ **Secondly, we believe in the literal, personal, imminent, pre-tribulation and pre-millennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ with His redeemed ones.**

Now let’s look at our Scripture passage from **1 Thes. 4.** There are five truths for us to see and learn this morning.

**I. THE PROBLEM OF SORROW V-13**

Notice that he uses the word **“ignorant”** here in **V-13.** Meaning- “I want you to understand” or “I want you to know.” Paul is writing to clear up their confusion about those who have **“fallen asleep.”** The phrase **“fallen asleep”** is used in **verse 13, verse 14,** and **verse 15** to describe believers who have died. This is a wonderful way to speak of death for the believer. But our bodies are **“asleep”** in the sense that they will wake up again and be resurrected. Paul is not saying that believers should not have sorrow when a loved one dies. After all, Jesus wept when Lazarus died (**John 11:35**). However, the Christian sorrow has **HOPE,** not despair as a lost person has.

**II. THE PROMISE IS SURE V-14**

We can know that the promise of the rapture is sure because it is built on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as we see in **verse 14.** This is a concise summary of biblical Christianity. Jesus died as full payment for our sins. By rising from the dead, He conquered death. The Resurrection proved that God the Father accepted the sacrifice of His Son and guaranteed that we too will be raised to new life.

The first part of **verse 15** gives us another reason to be confident of His coming: **“by the Word of the Lord...”** The Rapture is not a made-up doctrine. It’s not theological speculation. It’s sure because it’s built on three pillars - the **redemption provided by Christ, the resurrection of Christ, and the revelation of Christ.**

**III. THE PARTICIPANTS ARE CERTAIN V-15b**

There are two groups of people who will participate in the Rapture.

Believers who are alive

Believers who have died

**IV, THE PLAN IS SET Vs. 16-17**

The problem of sorrow is now solved because the promise is sure, and the participants are certain. The plan of the Rapture is set forth in **verses 16-17:** Paul lists eight key elements to this plan.

- 1. A Sudden Descent.**
- 2. A loud command (SHOUT).**
- 3. The voice of the archangel.**
- 4. The trumpet call of God**
- 5. A great resurrection**
- 6. A glorious rapture (CAUGHT UP)**
- 7. A grand reunion**
- 8. A joyful meeting**

**V. PURPOSE OF THE RAPTURE IS TO STRENGTHEN US V-18**

As we come to the end of this chapter, Paul the pastor reveals that the purpose of all that he has written is to comfort us or encourage us. Jesus is coming for His own. After establishing the truth of His return, and what will happen to our bodies, Paul concludes **1 Corinthians 15:58** with a very practical admonition.

The purpose of prophecy is to give us hope, comfort and encouragement. Jesus is coming again. It’s a promise for us to believe.