

CHRIST IS RISEN - ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 “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. 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. Therefore encourage one another with these words.”

65% of Americans believe that people go to heaven, hell or purgatory after death, 7% believe they go to another dimension, 6% believe they are reborn on earth, and 2% believe they become ghosts. Just 13% did not believe there is any afterlife, and 7% didn't know. (2010 60 Minutes/Vanity Fair Poll) The results of a worldwide poll indicated of those polled 51% believed in an afterlife of some kind, 23% death was final and 16% said they did not know.

As these polls indicate, there are many who believe that when a human being dies nothing further happens to them. Their body is buried or cremated. That is the end. Earth to earth and ashes to ashes. That's it! There is nothing more.

Yesterday I shared with you Jesus' promise He made to you that He will return to personally take you to live with Him. Today, 1 Thessalonians 4 is God's promise that parallels the one recorded in John 14. “The Lord Himself,” St. Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 4, will descend from heaven with a cry of command. . .and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive. . . will be caught up together with them . . .to meet the LORD.”

There is no uncertainty, doubt or ignorance about eternity for you, a believer in Jesus Christ. The Gospel's message tells you; you are an Easter person. Your resurrection is in your future. There is a life that follows this life for you. These words are in the context of Jesus' resurrection on Easter morning. You will meet the LORD on Judgment Day, at the Parousia, when Christ returns to claim you as His own. The promise of 1 Thessalonians 4 is personal, intimate and comforting. “O grave where is your victory?”

Christ is risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia! “Therefore encourage one another with these words.” (1 Thessalonians 4:18)

Prayer: O Holy Spirit, thank You for inspiring St. Paul to pen the words of 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 as words of encouragement for me. Continue to strengthen my faith in Jesus and through these words to give me peace and hope to meet my LORD at the Parousia. In His name. Amen.

Alleluia! Jesus is risen! Trumpets resounding in glorious light!
Splendor, the Lamb, Heaven forever! Oh, what a miracle God has in sight!
Refrain: Jesus is risen and we shall arise: Give God the glory! Alleluia!

Walking the way, Christ in the center Telling the story to open our eyes;
Breaking our bread, Giving us glory; Jesus our blessing, our constant
surprise. Refrain:

Jesus the vine, We are the branches; Life in the Spirit the fruit of the tree;
Heaven to earth, Christ to the people, Gift of the future now flowing to me.
Refrain:

Weeping, be gone; Sorrow, be silent: Death put asunder, and Easter is
bright, Cherubim sing: "O grace, be open!" Clothe us in wonder, adorn us in
light. Refrain:

City of God, Easter forever, Golden Jerusalem, Jesus the Lamb,
River of life, Saints and archangels, Sing with creation to God the I AM!
Refrain:
(LSB 474)