

## Comforting Words

"Wherefore, comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4:18). These are Paul's concluding words from his positive assurance to Thessalonian Christians that although some of their loved ones had died, such ones would not be denied participation in the return of Christ nor would those living at that time have advantage over them. The dead first would be raised then the living ones changed. This was a blessed promise to them.

Foundation for our hope of a resurrection is based upon the resurrection of Jesus (1 Pet. 1:3). It is interesting to note that prior to His death and resurrection, Jesus' proof for a future resurrection was based upon the continued existence of man's spirit. He submitted to skeptical Sadducees proof of man's continuing existence, arguing that God is not the God of the dead but of the living. In His commission to Moses, He identified Himself: "I am the God of Abraham, and of Isaac and of Jacob," thus Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were yet alive (Matt. 22:32). He said, "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit" (Jn. 12:24). They could observe this truth each time they sowed their fields. There is "life" in the seed that springs to life when the outer shell dies; there is life in our body that also will someday spring to life again. Jesus argued for the necessity of the resurrection based upon the eternal nature of our spirit (Jehovah Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists and all others who deny man's immortality, take note). There has been a demonstration of Jesus' thesis in His own resurrection.

Of course many words comfort us. Consider a few. "Come unto me, all ye that are labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30). "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and his ears are open unto their supplications" (1 Pet. 3:12). "Casting all your anxieties upon him for he careth for you" (1 Pet. 5:7). "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him turn unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him and unto our God for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:6-7). "Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18).

To the child of God, no source can give comforting words that compare with those of the Holy Scriptures. They lift our spirits, renew our commitment, fire our zeal and quicken our hope. David said, "This is my comfort in my affliction. Thy words have quickened me" (Psalms 119:50).

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