



WEEK ONE: MATTHEW 24 PART 1

WEEK TWO: MATTHEW 24 PART 2

WEEK THREE: 1 THESSALONIANS 4-5

WEEK 4: REVELATION 20

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Introduction: We're taking a look at Paul's letter to the Thessalonians, where the Apostle addresses the church's concerns about Jesus' second coming and the fate of those who have died before this occurs.

WARMING UP:

1. We experience this strangeness of time in many ways in life but most clearly in death. Death is abrupt, even if we know it's coming. It's final. What have been your experiences with death? How does this make you think about our final state as humans?

GOING DEEPER:

READ 1Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

1. What do you think Paul means by "we do not want you to grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope"? (v13) How important is *hope* in the Christian approach to death and grieving?

2. In verse 15 Paul uses the greek word *Parousia*, usually translated as the "coming of the Lord". This word brings to mind the Roman custom of the citizens of a city coming out to greet a returning King, and then escorting the King back into the city. How would you interpret verses 16-18 in light of this image?

One way to interpret these verses in through the lens of an impending rapture, in which the believers are taken up into the clouds to be protected from a time of tribulation when Jesus returns. How does the idea of the *Parousia* (escorting the King *back into the city*) challenge this perception?

5. Paul also makes clear that believers who have died will not miss out on the experience of seeing Jesus return. In fact, right now, they are "with the Lord" in an *intermediate state* (2 Corinthians 4:7-8). Here, Paul states that

they will be involved in the Parousia (v15). For those who have lost loved ones, what hope does this bring?

Bringing it home...

7. In 1 Thess 5:1-11, what does Paul say should be our response as believers **now** to this incredible hope of life after death?

8. Take an opportunity as a group, to speak the names of Christian loved ones who have died, with the sure hope they you will see them again upon Jesus' return.