

experience of seeing those who have meant much to us go on to their reward. He does not want us to be ignorant about them. He says, We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Him. According to the Lord's own word that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, ...

Paul says, We who are alive and are left till the coming of the Lord. Was Paul mistaken? R Does Paul say he is going to be alive when the Lord comes? I don't think we have to draw that conclusion. But I think we can draw this conclusion that he felt it was entirely possible that he would be alive, and that he could look forward to this hope as long as he lived. It was a vital part of his expectation that we who are alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven with a loud command, and with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. After that we who are still alive and are left will be caught ~~wap~~ up with them in the ~~xxx~~ clouds to meet the Lord in=the air, and we will be with the Lord forever. Wherefore encourage each other with these words.

One time it was my experience to listen to a very godly minister Sunday after Sunday for some years, and to hear him give very fine expositions of the great doctrines of the Scripture. But only once in all that time did I every hear him make any reference to the return of Christ. At that time he had announced that he would be glad to preach on subjects that individuals in the church might request. He received a number of requests, and he gave half a dozen sermons in taking up different matters that he had been requested. One of them said, I would like you to preach ~~xxx~~ on the rapture. This man took this passage and gave a marvelous sermon on it, and you could just see the Lord coming in the clouds and you could see believers being caught up to meet the returning saints in the air, and so they would be with the Lord forever. It was a marvelous sermon, a marvelous picture of the rapture.

But in the rest of those months when I heard that minister preach, I never heard him make a single reference to the return of Christ except in this one sermon which had so a beautifully described and explained the picture that is given us here in Paul's epistle.

I have known a few ministers who have preached on prophecy all the time and that certainly I do not think is right. I do not think we should make a ~~hobbyx==b~~ hobby of any one of the great doctrines of Scripture. But as over against a few like that, I have heard many many who just never referred to it, and Paul said there is a crown of righteousness for those --not only forhim-- but for all who long for the coming of Christ, all who love the coming of Christ. This passage ends with the words "therefore encourage each other with these words." This played a great part in the life of Paul. It played a great part in the life of all the earlier apostles/ It is not something way way off somewhere maybe 1000 years from now, at least 100 years from now, the Lord is going to come back.