

The Blessed Hope

Chapter 11

Audio Lesson: New Testament #65



Objective: To understand the background and content of 1 Thessalonians.



For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, 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 up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

– 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

The theme of 1 Thessalonians is Christ's Second Coming. In Acts 17, we learn about the founding of this church. Paul planted the church in Thessalonica in only three weeks. For three Sabbaths, Paul preached the Gospel in the synagogue, and some Jews and Greek men and women believed. Other Jews became jealous and persecuted Paul, so he had to escape the city.

In chapter 1, Paul wrote about three great qualities these young believers had: hope, faith, and love. He said that their work showed faith, their labor was prompted by love, and their hope gave them endurance (1:3). They were an example for others in Greece. In chapter 2, Paul reminded them of his ministry to them, to show that their spiritual prosperity was his priority. In chapter 3, Paul wrote about Timothy's encouraging report about them. In chapters 4 and 5, Paul gave practical advice about living in Christ in light of His Second Coming.

Paul tells us about the Rapture of the church and the Second Coming of Christ. The Jews were persecuting the Thessalonians, some of whom had even been martyred. The believers had many questions, especially about Christ's Second Coming. Paul comforted and assured them that Christ was alive and well and that He will come again for His people. He will come in the clouds for His Church, and the martyrs and those who have died will rise first. We do not know when the Rapture will take place, but we do know that Jesus is coming back someday, just as He promised. We are to be involved in a labor of love for Him while we watch and wait for His return.

1. True or False? The most famous words of 1 Thessalonians are "the dead in Christ will rise first."
2. True or False? Paul wrote this letter on his second missionary journey.
3. True or False? The prophets did not predict Christ's Second Coming.
4. True or False? Since we know that Christ is coming back, we should focus all our energy on watching and waiting instead of working.



Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. In the beginning of this letter, Paul commends the Thessalonians on three great qualities, including hope. What is hope for Christians? (Choose all that apply)
- The assurance of salvation and eternal life with the Lord
 - The conviction that there is good in this life and we will experience it
 - The belief that if you are a good person you will get into heaven
 - The certainty that we will never suffer or be sick
6. Why do you think the Thessalonians were so interested in Christ's Second Coming? (Choose all that apply)
- They were being persecuted.
 - They wanted to quit their jobs so they could watch for Him.
 - They wanted to know what would happen to their loved ones who had been martyred.
 - They wanted to be free to sin until He came back.
7. What are some characteristics of Paul's ministry to the church in Thessalonica? (Choose all that apply)
- Shared the hope of the Gospel boldly
 - Did not try to please God but to please men
 - Was not a burden to them
 - Treated them as his own children

8. In 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, Paul says, *“Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.”* What do you think he means? (Choose all that apply)

- a. Keep quiet about your faith.
- b. The best jobs involve working with your hands.
- c. Earn your own living.
- d. Win the respect of non-Christians by the way you live.

9. What does 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 tell us about Christ’s Second Coming? (Choose all that apply)

- a. We should not tell nonbelievers that He is coming back.
- b. Jesus will raise to life those who have died in Christ.
- c. The Lord will come down from heaven with a loud command.
- d. Believers will be with the Lord forever.



Paul wrote that the Thessalonians had become a model to other believers. Think about your own life. Could Paul say the same about you? Why or why not?

Are you waiting with anticipation for Jesus to come again? Why or why not?

Are you serving the Lord with love and a holy life? What can you do to serve Him better?



Praise God for the gift of salvation through Jesus’ death and resurrection. Thank Him for the assurance that Christ is coming again. Ask God to help you serve Him faithfully while you wait with expectation for His return. Ask God to show you how to honor Him with a holy life so that others will want to know Him too.



Going Deeper

1. How do you explain and apply the miraculous reality that a dynamic church was established in Thessalonica in less than one month? _____

2. How do you personally apply the reality that Paul taught these new believers so much about the Second Coming? _____

3. How do you personally apply the teaching of Paul that the Second Coming is the only hope for the world and the blessed hope of the church? _____

4. How do you relate to and apply the reality that the Second Coming is, in a special way, the blessed hope of the persecuted Church of Jesus Christ? _____

5. How do you personally relate the teachings in 4: 13-18 to the discourse of Jesus in Matthew 24 and 25? _____

6. How do you personally apply the fact that all the major passages on the Second Coming have very practical applications? _____

7. Find and apply 20 commandments Paul gives this church in chapter 5 in light of the Second Coming. _____
