

The Chronology of His Coming

Chapter 12

Audio Lesson: New Testament #66



Objective: To understand Paul's description of Christ's Second Coming in 1 and 2 Thessalonians and his practical advice on how to live until Christ returns.



Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober.

– 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6

Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else. Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil.

– 1 Thessalonians 5:13-22

As with 1 Thessalonians, the theme of 2 Thessalonians is Christ's Second Coming. Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians a few months after he wrote the first letter. His purpose for writing this letter was to continue to answer their questions and to refute the false report that the Day of the Lord had already come. Chapters 1 and 3 are similar to Paul's first letter to them, but chapter 2 is the key to this letter.

In chapter 2, Paul makes a distinction between two events: the Second Coming and the Day of the Lord. The Second Coming will be the Rapture, which Paul described in 1 Thessalonians 4. The Rapture is when the Church, all of the followers of Jesus Christ, will be taken out of this world to be with Jesus Christ.

The Day of the Lord, mentioned in Joel, Zephaniah, Zechariah, and 2 Peter, will be a cataclysmic judgment of the earth, during which God will wipe out the earth. That day cannot come until lawlessness or sin is allowed free rein over the earth for a season. Right now, the power of Christ is restraining the full power of sin in this world, but when that day comes, people will completely follow their sinful impulses. It will be a terrible time. The Antichrist will rise to power and will represent himself as the real Christ, warring against God and all who love and follow Jesus.

Many people believe that the Church will be raptured before the seven years of the Great Tribulation, because 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 says that God has not chosen to pour His anger out on us. Through the Rapture, God will rescue His people and then pour out His wrath on the unbelieving world that remains. If you know Jesus as your Savior, Paul's words bring comfort and hope. We are to live in Christ while we wait for Him to come back. Paul gave some practical commands in light of Christ's return, such as: respect your spiritual leaders; encourage and help one another; be patient and kind with others; be joyful always; and pray continually.



1. True or False? The chronology or timeline of the events of the Second Coming is clearly laid out in scripture.
2. True or False? Jesus said that even the Son of Man, referring to Himself, did not know the date or time of His Second Coming.
3. True or False? Our outlook and purpose in life are greatly affected by how we view the Second Coming of Christ.
4. True or False? Some people in Paul's day said that the Second Coming had already taken place.
5. True or False? Satan and the power of sin are restrained by the power of the Holy Spirit living in the hearts of His people.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

6. When you think about the Rapture, what is your reaction? (Choose all that apply)
 - a. Fear
 - b. Excitement
 - c. Doubt
 - d. Comfort

7. If Christians lived as though they believe that Christ is coming again soon, what would their lives look like to others? (Choose all that apply)

- a. They would share their faith boldly.
- b. They would think about and pray for His return.
- c. They would not worry about God's commands.
- d. They would strive to live more holy lives.

8. Paul wrote that we are to hold our pastors and other leaders "in the highest regard in love because of their work." What are some ways we can support our leaders? (Choose all that apply)

- a. Criticize them publicly
- b. Pray for them
- c. Encourage them with our words
- d. Support them financially

9. Paul said to pray continually. What do you think he meant by that?

- a. Only pastors need to pray all the time.
- b. Quit your job so you can devote your day to prayer.
- c. Keep your job but pray instead of working.
- d. Have an attitude of prayer all day long.

10. Why did Paul tell us to give thanks in all circumstances?

- a. He was exaggerating.
- b. He knew that giving thanks is crucial to experience the peace of God.
- c. He really meant for us to give thanks only when good things happen.
- d. He knew that giving thanks for bad things makes them good.



What are some commands to follow as we wait for Christ to come back? Which ones do you need to follow?

What do you think it means to quench the Holy Spirit or put out His fire? Have you ever done that? How can you avoid quenching the Holy Spirit?



Praise God that Jesus is coming back for His followers. Ask Him to help you overcome any doubt or disbelief you have about His Second Coming. Thank God that, because of His gift of salvation, you will live with Him forever, no matter what. Ask God to help you share your faith with those who do not believe in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Ask Him to help you live in Christ while you wait for His return, so that others will see Jesus in you.



Going Deeper

1. How are you able to make the personal applications that bring comfort to you as you read 2 Thessalonians chapter 2? _____

2. How do you apply the teaching in this second chapter that the Holy Spirit is restraining evil at this time? _____

3. How do you personally apply the teaching in this chapter that the restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit is going to be removed? _____

4. What will the world be like when this restraining influence of the Holy Spirit is removed? _____

5. Describe what this world will be like when all the salt influence of the believers is removed. _____

6. In your opinion, in what ways is the historical context being set for the coming of the antichrist? _____

7. How do you relate to and apply the teaching about the great tribulation here in chapter 2 and in Matthew 24? _____
