

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Spring Term of 2026**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE CRUCIAL POINTS OF THE TRUTH IN PAUL'S EPISTLES—
FIRST AND SECOND THESSALONIANS**

Message Thirteen

The Coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ and Our Gathering Together to Him

Scripture Reading: 1 Thes. 4:15-18; 5:16-18; 2 Thes. 2:1-12; Dan. 2:28; 9:27

- I. The two Epistles to the Thessalonians were written in the light of the Lord's coming; we need to see "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him"—2 Thes. 2:1-12:**
 - A. Every chapter of 1 Thessalonians ends with the coming of the Lord; this shows that the writer, Paul, lived and worked with the Lord's coming before him, taking it as an attraction, an incentive, a goal, and a warning; he not only did this himself but also encouraged the believers under his care to do the same—1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:15-18; 5:23.
 - B. Because we are awaiting the Son of God from the heavens, our future is focused on Him; our life declares that we have no hope on this earth and no positive destiny in this age, and that our hope is the coming Lord, who is our destiny forever; this governs, holds, and keeps our Christian life for the church life—1:10; 2 Thes. 2:1, 8; 1 Pet. 1:1; 2:11; Heb. 11:13; Gen. 13:3-4, 18.
- II. The Greek word for *coming* (*parousia*) means "presence"; Christ's coming will be His presence with His people; His parousia will begin with the rapture of the man-child (Rev. 12:5) and of the firstfruits (14:1-4) before the great tribulation and will end with His appearing on the earth with the saints at the end of the great tribulation (Matt. 24:27, 30; 2 Thes. 2:8; Jude 14):**
 - A. Before the three and a half years of the great tribulation, the overcomers among the believers will be raptured into Christ's presence (*parousia*) in the heavens—Rev. 12:5-6; 14:1-5; Luke 21:34-36; Matt. 24:36-44.
 - B. At the end of the three and a half years of the great tribulation, the second half of the last week in Daniel 9:27, the majority of the believers, both the dead and resurrected and the living, will be raptured into Christ's presence (*parousia*) in the air; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 speaks of this rapture, which corresponds to the reaping of the harvest in Revelation 14:14-16.
- III. The Lord will come secretly as a thief to those who love Him and will steal them away as His treasures to bring them into His presence in the heavens; hence, we must watch and make ourselves ready to be His bride—Dan. 10:19; Matt. 24:42-44; 25:13; Rev. 19:7; 22:20:**
 - A. Every day that we have is truly the Lord's grace; therefore, as long as we have today, as long as we still have breath, we must love the Lord and His appearing, await the Lord's coming, and always take His coming as an encouragement—1 Thes. 5:1-11; 2 Tim. 4:1, 6-8; Luke 12:16-20.
 - B. We must be absolutely consecrated to God, having one heart to love Him, seek Him, live Him, and be constituted with Him to be His expression and having one way—the Triune God Himself as the inner law of life with its divine capacity—Jer. 32:39-41; 31:33-34.

- C. We must be reconstituted with the holy Word of God, reading the Bible all the days of our life—Col. 3:16; Deut. 17:18-20; Psa. 119:15-16; 2 Tim. 3:16-17.
- D. We must persevere in prayer to glorify God, thank God, worship God, and serve God; our prayer and our being should be totally for God's interests—Dan. 6:10; 9:17; 1 Kings 8:48; cf. Rom. 1:21, 25.
- E. We must be self-sacrificing persons in oneness with Christ as the One who sacrifices Himself for others—1 Thes. 2:1-12, 19-20; 5:12-15; Phil. 1:22-26.
- F. We must be watchful, on the alert, for our prayer life, cooperating with the indwelling, sanctifying Spirit to live a rejoicing, praying, and thanking life as a glory to God and a shame to His enemy—Matt. 25:13; Col. 4:2; 1 Thes. 5:16-18.
- G. We must not beat our fellow slaves, eat and drink with the drunken, or bury the Lord's gift; instead, we must feed God's children, spreading the truth of the gospel of the kingdom to the whole inhabited earth—Matt. 24:14, 45-51; 25:25.
- H. We must keep the word of the Lord's endurance, standing against the wearing-out tactics of Satan, and live, walk, and work by faith and love in the hope of the Lord's coming back—Rev. 3:10; Dan. 7:25; 1 Thes. 1:3.

IV. We need to see the signs of the Lord's second and imminent coming—Matt. 24:1-3:

- A. The greatest sign of the end of this age (when the last three and a half years of the great tribulation are about to begin) is the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom to the whole inhabited earth—v. 14; Rev. 6:2.
- B. Another great sign of the Lord's coming is when Israel, represented by the fig tree, was miraculously restored as a nation; to the believers this fig tree is a sign of the end of this age—Matt. 24:32-35; Jer. 24:2, 5, 8.
- C. Before the day of the Lord's second coming, the apostasy will come, and the man of lawlessness, Antichrist, will be revealed—2 Thes. 2:3, 7:
 1. Sin is lawlessness, which is the living of a life outside of and not under the principle of God's ruling over man—1 John 3:4.
 2. The mystery of lawlessness is working today among the nations and in human society until Antichrist as the man of lawlessness is revealed; because the perishing ones do not receive the love of the truth, God sends to them an operation of error, an active power of misleading, that they might believe the lie—2 Thes. 2:11.
 3. Thus, we can see that Isaiah 5:20 is fulfilled with the ones who believe the lie: "Woe to those who call evil good, / And good evil; / Who put darkness for light, / And light for darkness; / Who put bitter for sweet, / And sweet for bitter!"
 4. When the great tribulation, the last three and a half years of this age, is about to begin, Antichrist will set up an abominable idol of desolation, an image of himself, in the temple and make people worship both it and him (Matt. 24:15; Dan. 9:27; Rev. 13:14; 14:9, 11); this shows that the temple of God will be rebuilt before the Lord comes back (2 Thes. 2:4).
- D. A sign of the Lord's second coming is that the conditions of evil living that stupefied the generation of Noah before the flood portray the perilous condition of man's living before the Lord's coming and the great tribulation—Matt. 24:3, 21, 27, 37, 39; Luke 17:26-27.
- E. A sign of the Lord's second coming is a lack of faith among many of His believers: "When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"—18:8:
 1. Without faith we cannot realize God's economy, for God's economy is in faith (1 Tim. 1:4); God's requirement for us related to everything in the New Testament is faith (Rom. 1:16-17; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17; Mark 11:22; Luke 18:8).
 2. Faith is a substantiating ability, giving substance to the things not seen or hoped for; faith assures us of the things not seen, convincing us of what we do not see; therefore, it is the evidence, the proof, of things not seen—Heb. 11:1.

3. We do not regard, or look at, the things which are seen but the things which are not seen (2 Cor. 4:18); the Christian life is a life of things unseen, and the Lord's recovery is to recover His church from things seen to things unseen (Rom. 8:24-25; Heb. 11:27; 1 Pet. 1:8; Gal. 6:10).
- F. Another sign of the Lord's second coming is that "because lawlessness will be multiplied, the love of the many will grow cold"—Matt. 24:12; Rev. 2:4.
 - G. A sign of the end times and of the Lord's second coming is the over-accumulation of wealth—"You have stored up treasure in the last days"—James 5:3:
 1. In the last days before the Lord's coming, men will accumulate wealth in an unprecedented way and will thus be unaware of their coming miseries and their miserable destiny of God's judgment—Matt. 16:27.
 2. In the last days there will be a multiplication of material enjoyment and lustful indulgence with unprecedented hedonism—James 5:1-6; cf. Zech. 5:5-11.
- V. To be taken by the Lord, we need to be those who are watchful for His imminent coming and prepared and ready to be His bride (Matt. 24:32-44; Rev. 19:7) so that we may be raptured before the great tribulation (3:10; Luke 21:36):**
- A. The meaning of rapture is to be taken into the Lord's presence; if we would be taken into the Lord's presence, we must be in His presence today—2 Cor. 2:10; Psa. 16:11; 27:8; 43:4; Acts 3:19-20; Exo. 33:14-16; cf. Gen. 4:16.
 - B. In order to be those who love the Lord's appearing, His coming back, we must treasure His appearing, His manifestation, to us today—2 Tim. 4:8; Acts 26:16; John 14:21.
 - C. The one who is taken is mature in life, and the other is not; to become mature is a lifelong matter; for the Lord's coming, we need to prepare ourselves by loving Him to the uttermost and by growing up into Him in all things so that, at His appearing, we may be matured to be raptured—Heb. 6:1; John 21:15-17; Eph. 4:15; cf. Gen. 5:22-24.
 - D. Being ready to be raptured is a matter of being filled with Christ to the uttermost by praying that we may grow and mature in life—Eph. 3:16-17a; *Hymns*, #395.
 - E. The meaning of being watchful is to be careful, not careless, every day on the alert against the possibility of stumbling; those who watch must be those who do not trust in themselves and are not self-confident—Jer. 17:7-8; 2 Cor. 1:8-9; Phil. 3:3; 1 Cor. 10:12.
 - F. The Lord will come secretly, as a thief (Matt. 24:43-44), to those who love Him and will take them away as His treasures; Christ is the preciousness to His believers (1 Pet. 2:7), and our desire is for Him to fill us and saturate us with Himself as our supreme preciousness, our treasure (2 Cor. 4:7), so that we become men of preciousness, even preciousness itself (Dan. 9:23; 10:11, 19).
 - G. Especially in these last days, we need to be watchful and give heed to the prophetic word as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in our hearts (2 Pet. 1:19); in the few remaining days that we have, let us be those who love and serve the Lord, who are revived and overcoming every day in order to be ready and waiting with all our heart for the Lord's second coming.
 - H. We must be those who have dispensational value to God "in the last days," those who are being prepared to be God's dispensational instrument, Christ's bridal army, to turn the age for the glory of God and the kingdom of God—Dan. 2:28; Rev. 12:1-5; 14:1-5; 19:7-9, 13-16.