

**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

1 Thes. 4:15-18—For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are living, who are left remaining unto the coming of the Lord, shall by no means precede those who have fallen asleep; ¹⁶Because the Lord Himself, with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are living, who are left remaining, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and thus we will be always with the Lord. ¹⁸Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thes. 5:16-18—Always rejoice, ¹⁷Unceasingly pray, ¹⁸In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

2 Thes. 2:1-12—Now we ask you, brothers, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, ²That you be not quickly shaken in mind nor alarmed, neither by a spirit nor by word nor by a letter as if by us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. ³Let no one deceive you in any way, because *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or an object of worship, so that he sits in the temple of God, setting himself forth, *saying* that he is God. ⁵Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I said these things to you? ⁶And now you know that which restrains, so that he might be revealed in his own time. ⁷For *it is* the mystery of lawlessness *that* is now operating, *but* only until the one now restraining goes out of the way. ⁸And then the lawless one will be revealed (whom the Lord Jesus will slay by the breath of His mouth and bring to nothing by the manifestation of His coming), ⁹The coming of whom is according to Satan's operation in all power and signs and wonders of a lie ¹⁰And in all deceit of unrighteousness among those who are perishing, because they did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved. ¹¹And because of this God sends to them an operation of error that they might believe the lie, ¹²So that all who have not believed the truth but have taken pleasure in unrighteousness might be judged.

Dan. 2:28—But there is a God in the heavens who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in the last days. This is your dream, even the visions of your head upon your bed.

Dan. 9:27—And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week; and in the middle of the week he will cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease and will replace the sacrifice and the oblation with abominations of the desolator, even until the complete destruction that has been determined is poured out upon the desolator.

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:

2 Thes. 2:1-12—Now we ask you, brothers, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, ²That you be not quickly shaken in mind nor alarmed, neither by a spirit nor by word nor by a letter as if by us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. ³Let no one deceive you in any way, because *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or an object of worship, so that he sits in the temple of God, setting himself forth, *saying* that he is God. ⁵Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I said these things to you? ⁶And now you know that which restrains, so that he might be revealed in his own time. ⁷For *it is* the mystery of lawlessness *that* is now operating, *but* only until the one now restraining goes out of the way. ⁸And then the lawless one will be revealed (whom the Lord Jesus will slay by the breath of His mouth and bring to nothing by the manifestation of His coming), ⁹The coming of whom is according to Satan's operation in all power and signs and wonders of a lie ¹⁰And in all deceit of unrighteousness among those who are perishing, because they did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved. ¹¹And because of this God sends to them an operation of error that they might believe the lie, ¹²So that all who have not believed the truth but have taken pleasure in unrighteousness might be judged.

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.

1 Thes. 1:10—And await His Son from the heavens, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath which is coming.

1 Thes. 2:19—For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at His coming? Are not even you?

1 Thes. 3:13—So that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

1 Thes. 4:15-18—For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are living, who are left remaining unto the coming of the Lord, shall by no means precede those who have fallen asleep; ¹⁶Because the Lord Himself, with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are living, who are left remaining, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and thus we will be always with the Lord. ¹⁸Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thes. 5:23—And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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.

1 Thes. 1:10—And await His Son from the heavens, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath which is coming.

2 Thes. 2:1—Now we ask you, brothers, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him,

2 Thes. 2:8—And then the lawless one will be revealed (whom the Lord Jesus will slay by the breath of His mouth and bring to nothing by the manifestation of His coming),

1 Pet. 1:1—Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the sojourners of the dispersion of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

1 Pet. 2:11—Beloved, I entreat *you* as strangers and sojourners to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul,

Heb. 11:13—All these died in faith, not receiving the promises but seeing them from afar and joyfully greeting *them* and confessing that they were strangers and sojourners on the earth.

Gen. 13:3-4—And he continued on his journey from the Negev as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, ⁴To the place of the altar, which he had made there formerly; and there Abram called on the name of Jehovah.

Gen. 13:18—And Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to Jehovah.

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):

Rev. 12:5—And she brought forth a son, a man-child, who is to shepherd all the nations with an iron rod; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.

Rev. 14:1-4—And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. ²And I heard a voice out of heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder; and the voice which I heard was like *the sound* of harp-singers playing on their harps. ³And they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the hundred and forty-four thousand, who have been purchased from the earth. ⁴These are they who have not been defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are they who follow the Lamb wherever He may go. These were purchased from among men *as* firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.

Matt. 24:27—For just as the lightning comes forth from the east and shines to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Matt. 24:30—And at that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the land will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

2 Thes. 2:8—And then the lawless one will be revealed (whom the Lord Jesus will slay by the breath of His mouth and bring to nothing by the manifestation of His coming),

Jude 14—And Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied also of these, saying, Behold, the Lord came with myriads of His saints

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.**

Rev. 12:5-6—And she brought forth a son, a man-child, who is to shepherd all the nations with an iron rod; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne. ⁶And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place there prepared by God so that they might nourish her there a thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Rev. 14:1-5—And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. ²And I heard a voice out of heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder; and the voice which I heard was like *the sound* of harp-singers playing on their harps. ³And they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the hundred and forty-four thousand, who have been purchased from the earth. ⁴These are they who have not been defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are they who follow the Lamb wherever He may go. These were purchased from among men *as* firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. ⁵And in their mouth no lie was found; they are without blemish.

Luke 21:34-36—But take heed to yourselves lest perhaps your hearts be weighed down with debauchery and drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day come upon you suddenly as a snare. ³⁵For it will come in upon all those dwelling on the face of all the earth. ³⁶But be watchful at every time, beseeching that you would prevail to escape all these things which are about to happen and stand before the Son of Man.

Matt. 24:36-44—But concerning that day and hour, no one knows, not even the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but the Father only. ³⁷For just as the days of Noah were, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸For as they were in those days before the flood, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day in which Noah entered into the ark, ³⁹And they did not know *that judgment was coming* until the flood came and took all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ⁴⁰At that time two men will be in the field; one is taken and one is left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding at the mill; one is taken and one is left. ⁴²Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord comes. ⁴³But know this, that if the householder had known in which watch the thief was coming, he would have watched and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴For this reason you also be ready, because at an hour when you do not expect *it*, the Son of Man is coming.

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.

Dan. 9:27—And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week; and in the middle of the week he will cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease and will replace the sacrifice and the oblation with abominations of the desolator, even until the complete destruction that has been determined is poured out upon the desolator.

1 Thes. 4:16-17—Because the Lord Himself, with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are living, who are left remaining, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and thus we will be always with the Lord.

Rev. 14:14-16—And I saw, and behold, *there was* a white cloud, and on the cloud One like the Son of Man sitting, having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. ¹⁵And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, Send forth Your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come because the harvest of the earth is ripe. ¹⁶And He who sat on the cloud thrust His sickle upon the earth, and the earth was reaped.

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:

Dan. 10:19—And he said, Do not be afraid, man of preciousness. Peace to you. Be strong, yes, be strong. And when he spoke to me, I received strength and said, Speak, sir, for you have strengthened me.

Matt. 24:42-44—Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord comes. ⁴³But know this, that if the householder had known in which watch the thief was coming, he would have watched and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴For this reason you also be ready, because at an hour when you do not expect *it*, the Son of Man is coming.

Matt. 25:13—Watch therefore, for you do not know the day nor the hour.

Rev. 19:7—Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.

Rev. 22:20—He who testifies these things says, Yes, I come quickly. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

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.

1 Thes. 5:1-11—But concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need *for anything* to be written to you; ²For you yourselves know perfectly well that like a thief in the night, so the day of the Lord comes. ³When they say, Peace and security, then sudden destruction comes upon them, just as birth pangs to a woman with child; and they shall by no means escape. ⁴But you, brothers, are not in darkness that the day should overtake you like a thief; ⁵For you are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are

not of the night nor of darkness. ⁶So then let us not sleep, as the rest do, but let us watch and be sober. ⁷For those who sleep, sleep during the night, and those who get drunk are drunk during the night; ⁸But since we are of the day, let us be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love and a helmet, the hope of salvation. ⁹For God did not appoint us to wrath but to the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰Who died for us in order that whether we watch or sleep, we may live together with Him. ¹¹Therefore comfort one another, and build up each one the other, even as you also do.

2 Tim. 4:1—I solemnly charge *you* before God and Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:

2 Tim. 4:6-8—For I am already being poured out, and the time of my departure is at hand. ⁷I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith. ⁸Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.

Luke 12:16-20—And He told them a parable, saying, The land of a certain rich man brought forth abundantly. ¹⁷And he reasoned in himself, saying, What shall I do, for I have no *place* where I may gather my crops? ¹⁸And he said, I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and I will gather there all my wheat and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; rest, eat, drink, be merry. ²⁰But God said to him, Foolish one, this night they are requiring your soul from you; and the things which you have prepared, whose will they be?

- 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.

Jer. 32:39-41—And I will give them one heart and one way, to fear Me all the days, for their own good and for *the good of* their children after them. ⁴⁰And I will make an eternal covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put My fear into their hearts, so that they will not turn away from Me. ⁴¹And I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness with all My heart and with all My soul.

Jer. 31:33-34—But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares Jehovah: I will put My law in their inward parts and write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. ³⁴And they will no longer teach, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for all of them will know Me, from the little one among them even to the great one among them, declares Jehovah, for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.

- 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.

Col. 3:16—Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God.

Deut. 17:18-20—And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write out for himself a copy of this law in a book, out of *that which is* before the Levitical priests. ¹⁹And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, in order that he may learn to fear Jehovah his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes and doing them, ²⁰So that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers and he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right or to the left; that he and his sons may extend their days over their kingdom in the midst of Israel.

Psa. 119:15-16—I will muse upon Your precepts And regard Your ways. ¹⁶I will take delight in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.

2 Tim. 3:16-17—All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷That the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.

- 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.

Dan. 6:10—Now when Daniel came to know that the writing had been signed, he went to his house (in his upper room he had windows open toward Jerusalem) and three times daily he knelt on his knees and prayed and gave thanks before his God, because he had *always* done so previously.

Dan. 9:17—And now hear, O our God, the prayer of Your servant and his supplications, and cause Your face to shine upon Your sanctuary that has been desolated, for the Lord's sake.

1 Kings 8:48—And *if* they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies, who have carried them captive, and they pray to You toward their land that You have given to their fathers, the city that You have chosen, and the house that I have built for Your name;

cf. Rom. 1:21—Because though they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God or thank *Him*, but *rather* became vain in their reasonings, and their heart, lacking understanding, was darkened.

cf. Rom. 1:25—Who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshipped and served the creation rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

- 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.

1 Thes. 2:1-12—For you yourselves know, brothers, our entrance toward you, that it has not been in vain. ²But having suffered previously and having been outrageously treated, even as you know, in Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much struggle. ³For our exhortation is not out of deception nor out of uncleanness nor in guile; ⁴But even as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men but God, who proves our hearts. ⁵For neither were we found at any time with flattering speech, even as you know, nor with a pretext for covetousness; God is witness. ⁶Nor did we seek glory from men, neither from you nor from others, though we could have stood on our authority as apostles of Christ. ⁷But we were gentle in your midst, as a nursing mother would cherish her own children.

⁸Yearning in this way over you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own souls, because you became beloved to us. ⁹For you remember, brothers, our labor and travail: While working night and day so as not to be burdensome to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. ¹⁰You are witnesses, as well as God, how in a holy and righteous and blameless manner we conducted ourselves toward you who believe, ¹¹Just as you know how *we were* to each one of you, as a father to his own children, exhorting you and consoling *you* and testifying, ¹²So that you might walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

1 Thes. 2:19-20—For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at His coming? Are not even you? ²⁰For you are our glory and joy.

1 Thes. 5:12-15—Furthermore we ask you, brothers, to acknowledge those who labor among you and take the lead among you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³And to regard them most highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. ¹⁴And we exhort you, brothers, Admonish the disorderly, console the fainthearted, sustain the weak, be long-suffering toward all. ¹⁵See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always pursue what is good both for one another and for all.

Phil. 1:22-26—But if *I am* to live in the flesh, if this to me is fruit for *my* work, then I do not know what I will choose. ²³But I am constrained between the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for *this is* far better; ²⁴But to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. ²⁵And being confident of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of the faith, ²⁶That your boast may abound in Christ Jesus in me through my coming again to you.

- 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. **Matt. 25:13**—Watch therefore, for you do not know the day nor the hour.

Col. 4:2—Persevere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving,

1 Thes. 5:16-18—Always rejoice, ¹⁷Unceasingly pray, ¹⁸In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

- 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. **Matt. 24:14**—And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole inhabited earth for a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Matt. 24:45-51—Who then is the faithful and prudent slave, whom the master has set over his household to give them food at the proper time? ⁴⁶Blessed is that slave whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. ⁴⁷Truly I say to you that he will set him over all his possessions. ⁴⁸But if that evil slave says in his heart, My master delays, ⁴⁹And begins to beat his fellow slaves and eats and drinks with the drunken, ⁵⁰The master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect *him* and at an hour which he does not know, ⁵¹And will cut him asunder and appoint his portion with the hypocrites. In that place there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

Matt. 25:25—And I was afraid and went off and hid your talent in the earth; behold, you have what is yours.

- 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.

Rev. 3:10—Because you have kept the word of My endurance, I also will keep you out of the hour of trial, which is about to come on the whole inhabited earth, to try them who dwell on the earth.

Dan. 7:25—And he will speak things against the Most High and wear out the saints of the Most High; and his intention will be to change the times and the law; and they will be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.

1 Thes. 1:3—Remembering unceasingly your work of faith and labor of love and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father;

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

Matt. 24:1-3—And Jesus came out from the temple and was going away, and His disciples came to *Him* to show Him the buildings of the temple. ²But He answered and said to them, Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, There shall by no means be left here a stone upon a stone, which shall not be thrown down. ³And as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, Tell us, When will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming and of the consummation of the age?

- 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.

Matt. 24:14—And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole inhabited earth for a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Rev. 6:2—And I saw, and behold, a white horse, and he who sits on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer.

- 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.

Matt. 24:32-35—But learn the parable from the fig tree: As soon as its branch has become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that the summer is near. ³³So also you, when you see all these things, know that it is near, at the doors. ³⁴Truly I say to you that this generation shall by no means pass away until all these things happen. ³⁵Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall by no means pass away.

Jer. 24:2—One basket had very good figs, like first ripe figs, but the other basket had very bad figs, which could not be eaten because of *their* rottenness.

Jer. 24:5—Thus says Jehovah the God of Israel, Like these good figs, so I will regard those who are exiled of Judah, whom I have sent from this place to the land of the Chaldeans, for good.

Jer. 24:8—And like the bad figs that cannot be eaten because of *their* rottenness, thus says Jehovah, so I will make Zedekiah, the king of Judah, and his princes and the remnant of Jerusalem who remain in this land and those who dwell in the land of Egypt—

- 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:

2 Thes. 2:3—Let no one deceive you in any way, because *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition,

2 Thes. 2:7—For *it is* the mystery of lawlessness *that* is now operating, *but* only until the one now restraining goes out of the way.

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.

1 John 3:4—Everyone who practices sin practices lawlessness also, and sin is lawlessness.

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.

2 Thes. 2:11—And because of this God sends to them an operation of error that they might believe the lie,

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).

Matt. 24:15—Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him who reads understand),

Dan. 9:27—And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week; and in the middle of the week he will cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease and will replace the sacrifice and the oblation with abominations of the desolator, even until the complete destruction that has been determined is poured out upon the desolator.

Rev. 13:14—And he deceives those who dwell on the earth on account of the signs which he was given *power* to do before the beast, commanding those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast, who had the stroke of the sword and revived.

Rev. 14:9—And another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand,

Rev. 14:11—And the smoke of their tormenting goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.

2 Thes. 2:4—Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or an object of worship, so that he sits in the temple of God, setting himself forth, *saying* that he is God.

- 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.

Matt. 24:3—And as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, Tell us, When will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming and of the consummation of the age?

Matt. 24:21—For at that time there will be great tribulation, such as has not occurred from the beginning of the world until now, nor shall by any means ever occur.

Matt. 24:27—For just as the lightning comes forth from the east and shines to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Matt. 24:37—For just as the days of Noah were, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Matt. 24:39—And they did not know *that judgment was coming* until the flood came and took all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Luke 17:26-27—And even as it happened in the days of Noah, so will it be also in the days of the Son of Man: ²⁷They were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day in which Noah entered into the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all.

- 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).

1 Tim. 1:4—Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

Rom. 1:16-17—For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes, both to Jew first and to Greek. ¹⁷For the righteousness of God is revealed in it out of faith to faith, as it is written, "But the righteous shall have life and live by faith."

Gal. 2:20—I am crucified with Christ; and *it is* no longer I *who* live, but *it is* Christ *who* lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the *faith* of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Eph. 3:17—That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

Mark 11:22—And Jesus answered and said to them, Have faith in God.

Luke 18:8—I tell you that He will carry out their avenging quickly. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?

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.

Heb. 11:1—Now faith is the substantiation of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

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).

2 Cor. 4:18—Because we do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Rom. 8:24-25—For we were saved in hope. But a hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly await *it* through endurance.

Heb. 11:27—By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he persevered as one seeing the unseen One.

1 Pet. 1:8—Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing *Him* at present, yet believing, you exult with joy *that is* unspeakable and full of glory,

Gal. 6:10—So then, as we have the opportunity, let us do what is good toward all, but especially toward those of the household of the faith.

- 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.

Rev. 2:4—But I have *one thing* against you, that you have left your first love.

- 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.

Matt. 16:27—For the Son of Man is to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will repay each man according to his doings.

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.

James 5:1-6—Come now, you rich, weep, howling over your miseries, which are coming upon you! ²Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten; ³Your gold and your silver have rusted, and their rust will be a testimony against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have stored up treasure in the last

days. ⁴Behold, the wages of the workmen who mowed your fields, which have been withheld by you, cry out; and the cries of those who reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of hosts. ⁵You have lived luxuriously on the earth and have given yourselves to pleasure; you have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter. ⁶You condemned, you murdered the righteous; he does not resist you.

cf. Zech. 5:5-11—Then the angel who spoke with me went forth and said to me, Lift up now your eyes and see what this is that goes forth. ⁶And I said, What is it? And he said, This is the ephah vessel that goes forth; and he said, This is their appearance in all the land; ⁷(Then a lead cover was lifted up) and this is a woman sitting within the ephah vessel. ⁸Then he said, This is Wickedness. And he threw her down into the midst of the ephah vessel and threw the lead weight over its opening. ⁹Then I lifted up my eyes and I looked, and there were two women going forth, and the wind was in their wings; and they had wings like the wings of a stork. And they lifted up the ephah vessel between the earth and the heavens. ¹⁰And I said to the angel who spoke with me, Where are they taking the ephah vessel? ¹¹And he said to me, To build a house for her in the land of Shinar; and when it is prepared, she will be set there in her own place.

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):

Matt. 24:32-44—But learn the parable from the fig tree: As soon as its branch has become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that the summer is near. ³³So also you, when you see all these things, know that it is near, at the doors. ³⁴Truly I say to you that this generation shall by no means pass away until all these things happen. ³⁵Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall by no means pass away. ³⁶But concerning that day and hour, no one knows, not even the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but the Father only. ³⁷For just as the days of Noah were, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸For as they were in those days before the flood, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day in which Noah entered into the ark, ³⁹And they did not know *that judgment was coming* until the flood came and took all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ⁴⁰At that time two men will be in the field; one is taken and one is left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding at the mill; one is taken and one is left. ⁴²Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord comes. ⁴³But know this, that if the householder had known in which watch the thief was coming, he would have watched and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴For this reason you also be ready, because at an hour when you do not expect *it*, the Son of Man is coming.

Rev. 19:7—Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.

Rev. 3:10—Because you have kept the word of My endurance, I also will keep you out of the hour of trial, which is about to come on the whole inhabited earth, to try them who dwell on the earth.

Luke 21:36—But be watchful at every time, beseeching that you would prevail to escape all these things which are about to happen and stand before the Son of Man.

- 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.
2 Cor. 2:10—But whom you forgive anything, I also *forgive*; for also what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, *it is* for your sake in the person of Christ;
- Psa. 16:11**—You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand there are pleasures forever.
- Psa. 27:8**—*When You say, Seek My face, To You my heart says, Your face, O Jehovah, will I seek.*
- Psa. 43:4**—And I will go to the altar of God, To God my exceeding joy; And I will praise You with the harp, O God, my God.
- Acts 3:19-20**—Repent therefore and turn, that your sins may be wiped away, ²⁰So that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord and that He may send the Christ, who has been previously appointed for you, Jesus,
- Exo. 33:14-16**—And He said, My presence shall go *with you*, and I will give you rest.
¹⁵And he said to Him, If Your presence does not go *with us*, do not bring us up from here.
¹⁶For how then shall it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, are distinct from all the *other* people who are on the face of the earth?
- cf. Gen. 4:16**—And Cain went forth from the presence of Jehovah and dwelt in the land of Nod, east of Eden.
- 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.
2 Tim. 4:8—Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.
- Acts 26:16**—But rise up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this *purpose*, to appoint you as a minister and a witness both of the things in which you have seen Me and of the things in which I will appear to you;
- John 14:21**—He who has My commandments and keeps them, he is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him.
- 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.
Heb. 6:1—Therefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us be brought on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith in God,

John 21:15-17—Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs. ¹⁶He said to him again a second time, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep. ¹⁷He said to him the third time, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.

Eph. 4:15—But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

cf. Gen. 5:22-24—And Enoch walked with God after he had begotten Methuselah three hundred years, and he begot *more* sons and daughters. ²³And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty-five years. ²⁴And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

- 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.

Eph. 3:16-17—That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man, ¹⁷That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

- 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.

Jer. 17:7-8—Blessed is the man who trusts in Jehovah And whose trust Jehovah is. ⁸And he will be like a tree transplanted beside water, Which sends out its roots by a stream, And will not be afraid when heat comes; For its leaves remain flourishing, And it will not be anxious in the year of drought And will not cease to bear fruit.

2 Cor. 1:8-9—For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of our affliction which befell *us* in Asia, that we were excessively burdened, beyond *our* power, so that we despaired even of living. ⁹Indeed we ourselves had the response of death in ourselves, that we should not base our confidence on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead;

Phil. 3:3—For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh,

1 Cor. 10:12—So then let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

- 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).

Matt. 24:43-44—But know this, that if the householder had known in which watch the thief was coming, he would have watched and would not have allowed his house to be

broken into. ⁴⁴For this reason you also be ready, because at an hour when you do not expect *it*, the Son of Man is coming.

1 Pet. 2:7—To you therefore who believe is the preciousness; but to the unbelieving, “The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner,”

2 Cor. 4:7—But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us.

Dan. 9:23—At the beginning of your supplications the command went forth, and I have come to tell *you*, for you are preciousness itself. Therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

Dan. 10:11—And he said to me, Daniel, man of preciousness, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand in your place, for I have now been sent to you. And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling.

Dan. 10:19—And he said, Do not be afraid, man of preciousness. Peace to you. Be strong, yes, be strong. And when he spoke to me, I received strength and said, Speak, sir, for you have strengthened me.

- 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.

2 Pet. 1:19—And we have the prophetic word *made* more firm, to which you do well to give heed as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;

- 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.

Dan. 2:28—But there is a God in the heavens who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in the last days. This is your dream, even the visions of your head upon your bed.

Rev. 12:1-5—And a great sign was seen in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon underneath her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; ²And she was with child, and she cried out, travailing in birth and being in pain to bring forth. ³And another sign was seen in heaven; and behold, *there was* a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. ⁴And his tail drags away the third part of the stars of heaven, and he cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bring forth, so that when she brings forth he might devour her child. ⁵And she brought forth a son, a man-child, who is to shepherd all the nations with an iron rod; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.

Rev. 14:1-5—And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. ²And I heard a voice out of heaven like the sound of many waters and

like the sound of loud thunder; and the voice which I heard was like *the sound* of harp-singers playing on their harps. ³And they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the hundred and forty-four thousand, who have been purchased from the earth. ⁴These are they who have not been defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are they who follow the Lamb wherever He may go. These were purchased from among men *as* firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. ⁵And in their mouth no lie was found; they are without blemish.

Rev. 19:7-9—Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. ⁸And it was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteousneses of the saints. ⁹And he said to me, Write, Blessed are they who are called to the marriage dinner of the Lamb. And he said to me, These are the true words of God.

Rev. 19:13-16—And He is clothed with a garment dipped in blood; and His name is called the Word of God. ¹⁴And the armies which are in heaven followed Him on white horses, dressed in fine linen, white *and* clean. ¹⁵And out of His mouth proceeds a sharp sword, that with it He might smite the nations; and He will shepherd them with an iron rod; and He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶And He has on His garment and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.