

Thessalonians Bible Study

~ Lesson Five ~

Christ's



Coming! ~ Part One



Controversy swirls at the mention of Christ's second coming. For generations, forecasts of specific years, days, and hours have passed by unfulfilled. Recalculations follow and new estimations are released. Even during Paul's day, it was not uncommon to hear predictions of Christ's second coming. In fact, some even announced that Christ had already come and that those remaining on earth had simply missed it.

Over the next two lessons, we will explore Paul's teaching on the second coming of Christ. Before we begin, however, why not review a few of the signs the Bible announces as those that will accompany Christ's return in triumph? These signs appear in three specific categories: (1) signs in the Church; (2) signs in nature; and (3) signs in the life of people.

Signs in the Church will include the appearance of the Antichrist (covered in more detail in Lessons 9 and 10 of this study), false teachers, a falling away from the truth, and a hatred of Christians (Luke 21:12). *Signs in nature* will include earthquakes, famine, pestilence, and amazing sights in the sky (Luke 21:11). *Signs in the life of people* will appear as nations battle nations (Luke 21:10).

Time marches inevitably to God's drumbeat. Many of the signs Christ foretold have or are occurring. We live each day by God's grace. These are the end times as Peter wrote years ago, "The end of all things is at hand" (I Peter 4:7).

Setting the Stage

If these are the end times, how should believers live? Should they secret themselves away, hoarding food, water, and essential supplies? Will believers be swept away to meet the Lord in the sky with non-believers "left behind?" Answers to such questions sell books. Paul paints a vivid picture of Christ's triumphant return in 1 Thessalonians. Unlike His lowly birth, Christ's return to earth will be accompanied by shouts of acclamation and trumpets.

1. Scholars apply the term “eschatology” to the study of the last things. In your mind’s eye, how do you picture Christ’s second coming?

2. In the introduction to this lesson, you read about the signs of the end times. Some signs recorded in Scripture are occurring or have already occurred that reveal the approach of the Lord’s second coming. What are some of those signs that have occurred or are occurring?

Those a_____ in Christ!

Read I Thessalonians 4:13–15. Paul notes the Thessalonians’ concern over those who died before Christ’s return. The picture of sleep is an apt description for those who die in faith. In the twinkle of an eye, a person closes his or her eyes in death to awaken in the Lord’s presence in heaven.

3. What is the difference in grieving for those who have died in Christ and for those who have died without Christ (v. 14)?



4. What comforting promise is made in verse 14?

5. According to God’s Word, who will rise before those “who are left”?

e_____ One Another!

Read I Thessalonians 4:16–18. At the Lord’s second coming, a loud command, the voice of the archangel, and the sound of a trumpet, herald His return. When Jesus returns, the entire world will know about it.

6. Paul presents simultaneous events for Christ's second coming. Using I Thessalonians 4:16–18, put the events in the order that they appear in this passage.

A	_____	voice of the archangel
B	_____	dead in Christ rise
C	_____	living believers rise
D	_____	Christ descends
E	_____	meet the Lord in the air
F	_____	sound of trumpet

7. Read Mark 13:32–33. No one knows “that day or that hour.” Christ may return any time. How might this both admonish and comfort you?

8. Some Thessalonians who heard Paul's letter read aloud thought that those who died in Christ would not rise at His second coming. How does Paul correct this view to encourage his hearers?

The Coming ☽ _____!



9. Read I Thessalonians 5:1–3. Sudden destruction follows Christ's return as God scorches the earth with fire (see II Peter 3:10). Paul describes the arrival of the second coming “as labor pains upon a pregnant woman.” How is this an apt metaphor for Christ's second coming?

10. Read Matthew 24:36. Some religious teachers and denominations frequently try to guess when Christ will come again. Why is such guesswork unwise?

11. Since the Lord's second coming may occur at any time, why is it important that believers not hide themselves but instead share the Gospel with unbelievers?

God's Word for Today!

For many, the return of Christ on the Last Day brings no fear. In fact, they do not believe it will occur at all. In this case, Christ's arrival will catch them unprepared. Unfortunately, for them there can be no turning back when the trumpet sounds.



12. Read II Peter 3:9 for more information on the second coming. What do you find reassuring there?

13. What words of comfort might you offer a family who has recently lost a loved one who died trusting in Christ?

14. Read I Corinthians 15:42-44. Describe our resurrected bodies. What aspect of the resurrection do you find most comforting?

Closing

- Read about the armor of God in Ephesians 6:10–18.
- Read 1 Thessalonians 5:4–11 to prepare for the next session.

“The Bridegroom Soon will Call Us”

**The Bridegroom soon will call us, “Come to the wedding feast.”
May slumber not befall us Nor watchfulness decrease.
May all our lamps be burning With oil enough and more
That we, with Him returning, May find an open door!**

**There shall we see in glory
Our dear Redeemer's face;
The long-awaited story
Of heav'nly joy takes place:
The patriarchs shall meet us,
The prophets' holy band;
Apostles, martyrs greet us
In that celestial land.**



**There God shall from all evil Forever make us free,
From sin and from the devil, From all adversity,
From sickness, pain, and sadness, From troubles, cares, and fears,
And grant us heav'nly gladness And wipe away our tears.**

**In that fair home shall never Be silent music's voice;
With hearts and lips forever We shall in God rejoice,
While angel hosts are raising With saints from great to least
A mighty hymn for praising The Giver of the feast.**

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