

UNTIL HE RETURNS

1 & 2 Thessalonians

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Part 1: The Second Coming of Jesus Christ

1 & 2 Thessalonians places a special emphasis on the return of Christ. It is not merely a doctrine to debate; it is a hope that should shape how Christians live today.

A. The Second Coming is a **central** New Testament hope.

- **Key point:** The New Testament does not present Christ's return as a minor subject. Jesus promised to return, the apostles taught it, and the early church lived in expectation of it.
- **Scripture references:** John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; Philippians 3:20-21; Titus 2:11-13; Hebrews 9:28.
- **Thessalonian connection:** Every chapter of 1 Thessalonians points in some way to Christ's return: 1 Thess. 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:23.

B. Jesus Christ will **personally and visibly** return.

- **Key point:** The same Jesus who ascended into heaven will return. His coming is not merely symbolic or an idea; Scripture describes the personal return of the risen Lord.
- **Scripture references:** Acts 1:9-11; Matthew 24:30-31; Revelation 1:7.
- **Emphasis:** Christian hope rests in a Person—Jesus Christ—not simply in future events.

C. The timing of His return is **unknown**.

- **Key point:** Scripture gives signs and describes events surrounding Christ's return, but believers are not given permission to set dates.
- **Scripture references:** Matthew 24:36, 42-44; Acts 1:6-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2; 2 Peter 3:10.
- **Emphasis:** The proper response to an unknown date is readiness, not speculation.

D. Christ's return brings hope to believers.

- **Key point:** For Christians, the Second Coming is meant to comfort rather than frighten. Death does not have the final word, and believers will be gathered to Christ.
- **Scripture references:** John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.
- **Thessalonian connection:** Paul ends his explanation of the Lord's coming with, "*Therefore encourage one another with these words*" (1 Thess. 4:18).

E. Christ will raise the dead and transform living believers.

- **Key point:** At Christ's coming, believers who have died will be raised, and living believers will be transformed. God's people will ultimately be with the Lord forever.
- **Scripture references:** 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, 51-53; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.
- **Emphasis:** The Christian future is resurrection and transformation—not merely an existence as disembodied spirits.

F. Christ's return includes judgment.

- **Key point:** The same event that brings hope and vindication to God's people also brings judgment upon persistent unbelief and evil.
- **Scripture references:** Matthew 25:31-46; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; Revelation 20:11-15.
- **Thessalonian connection:** Second Thessalonians reassures persecuted believers that Jesus will ultimately set things right.

G. Believers must be alert and ready.

- **Key point:** Because Christ may return unexpectedly, Christians are called to spiritual alertness, faith, love, self-control, and faithful service.
- **Scripture references:** Matthew 24:42-46; 1 Thessalonians 5:4-8; 1 Peter 1:13; 4:7.
- **Emphasis:** Live as though Jesus could return at any moment!.

H. The Second Coming should produce holy living.

- **Key point:** Future hope should affect present behavior. Expecting Christ's return should encourage purity, perseverance, obedience, and godliness.

- **Scripture references:** 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13; 5:23; Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 3:2-3; 2 Peter 3:11-14.
- **Emphasis:** Prophecy is practical. What we believe about tomorrow should change how we live today.

I. The Second Coming should motivate Christian service and witness.

- **Key point:** We do not wait for Jesus passively. Until He returns, believers are to serve, work, encourage others, and make Christ known.
- **Scripture references:** Matthew 24:45-46; 28:18-20; Acts 1:8-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10; 5:11.
- **Thessalonian connection:** The Thessalonians were waiting for God's Son from heaven while their faith was becoming known throughout the region.

J. Believers should not be deceived or alarmed.

- **Key point:** Confusion about the end times was already troubling Christians in the first century. Paul urges believers not to be easily unsettled by rumors or false claims.
- **Scripture references:** Matthew 24:4-6, 23-27; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5.
- **Emphasis:** Sound biblical teaching protects Christians from panic, sensationalism, and false predictions.

K. The final Christian hope is to be with Christ forever.

- **Key point:** The greatest promise of the Second Coming is not simply escaping trouble or understanding a prophetic timetable. It is being with Jesus forever.
- **Scripture references:** John 14:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Revelation 21:1-4; 22:20.
- **Emphasis:** The heart of Christian hope is summed up in Paul's words: "And so we will be with the Lord forever" (1 Thess. 4:17).

L. Six ways to live "until He returns."

1. Wait expectantly — our hope is in Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 1:10).
2. Live faithfully — seek holiness and obedience (1 Thess. 3:13; 5:23).
3. Encourage one another — especially when facing grief or uncertainty (1 Thess. 4:18; 5:11).
4. Stay alert — do not become spiritually careless (1 Thess. 5:4-8).

5. **Stand firm** — do not be shaken by persecution, rumors, or false teaching (2 Thess. 1:4-7; 2:1-3, 15).
6. Keep your relationship with Jesus as your **highest priority** — do not use prophecy as an excuse for inactivity (1 Thess. 1:9–10).