

His Forthcoming Return.

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近づく再臨

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1 Thessalonians

4:1 Now then, brothers, you learned from us how you ought to live and to please God, as in fact you are doing. We ask and encourage you in the Lord to do so even more.

4:2 You know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

4:3 For it is God's will that you be sanctified: You must abstain from sexual immorality.

4:4 Each of you must know how to control his own body in a holy and honorable manner,

4:5 not with passion and lust like the gentiles who do not know God.

4:6 Furthermore, you must never take advantage of or exploit a brother in this regard, because the Lord avenges all these things, just as we already told you and warned you.

4:7 For God did not call us to be impure, but to be holy.

4:8 Therefore, whoever rejects this instruction is not rejecting human authority but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.

4:9 Now you do not need anyone to write to you about brotherly love, since you have been taught by God to love each other.

4:10 In fact, you are showing love to all the brothers throughout Macedonia, but we urge you, brothers, to keep on doing this even more.

4:11 Also, make it your goal to live quietly, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we instructed you,

4:12 so that you may win the respect of outsiders, and have need of nothing.

[International Standard Version]

Matthew

24:3 While Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately and said, "Tell us, when will these things take place, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

24:4 Jesus answered them, "See to it that no one deceives you,

24:5 because many will come in my name and say, 'I am the Messiah,' and they will deceive many people.

24:6 You are going to hear of wars and rumors of

wars. See to it that you are not alarmed. These things must take place, but the end hasn't come yet,

24:7 because nation will rise up in arms against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.

24:8 But all these things are only the beginning of the birth pains."

24:9 "Then they will hand you over to suffer and will kill you, and you will be hated by all the nations because of my name.

24:10 Then many people will fall away, will betray one another, and will hate one another.

24:11 Many false prophets will appear and deceive many people,

24:12 and because lawlessness will increase, the love of many people will grow cold.

24:13 But the person who endures to the end will be saved.

24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."

24:27 because just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

24:30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all 'the tribes of the land will mourn' when they see 'the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven' with power and great glory.

24:31 He will send out his angels with a loud trumpet blast, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to another."

24:32 "Now learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branches become tender and it produces leaves, you know that summer is near.

24:33 In the same way, when you see all these things, you will know that the Son of Man is near, right at the door.

24:36 "No one knows when that day or hour will come—not the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father,

24:42 "So keep on watching, because you don't know on what day your Lord is coming.

24:43 But be sure of this: if the owner of the house had known when during the night the thief would be coming, he would have stayed awake and not allowed his house to be broken into.

24:44 So you, too, must be ready, because at an hour you are not expecting him the Son of Man will come."

24:45 "Who, then, is the faithful and wise servant whom his master has put in charge of his household to give the others their food at the right

time?

24:46 How blessed is that servant whom his master finds doing this when he comes!

Today, I would like to continue the discussion based on this First Epistle to the Thessalonians. This was the first letter Paul wrote. Why did he have to write this letter? It was apparently not because he had too much time and nothing else to do. It was because, as the answer to his prayers, he came to believe that it was necessary to write this letter to the people in order to place the Lord at the center of their lives.

Seeing people struggle to accomplish something for the Lord, Paul clearly understood that they would be delivered from all pain if they stopped fighting, and instead surrendered themselves and cast everything to the Lord Almighty. This letter was presumably written in 50 A.D in the city of Corinth.

Needless to say, the heartfelt desire of Paul in writing this letter was not to teach the people as many things as possible, but it was rather to introduce Jesus to them. He was convinced that all he had to do was to let people know about Jesus and then the Holy Spirit would begin to give each and every one of them exactly what they needed.

Paul presumably stayed in Thessaloniki for about a month, which is implied in the expression “three Sabbaths.” The religion called Christianity was not born yet, which was fortunate for him, and Paul proclaimed with gratitude that Jesus alone was more than enough.

And as a result, many people had their eyes opened and came to feel blessed. They thought that it was exactly what they had been waiting for when they experienced Jesus, which made them rejoice. The first half of this chapter, which is between the verses 1 and 12, can be best entitled as “be prepared for the Second Coming of Jesus,” or, “the very important and absolutely necessary preparations all churches must make.” In this letter, the Second Coming of Jesus is explained as clear as his resurrection and the Ascension.

Acts

1:11 This same Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you saw him go up into heaven.

The Second Coming of Jesus will occur in two separate stages.

Firstly, Jesus will come down into the air to meet all those who belong to him, those who have received

forgiveness for their sins, and those who have gained eternal lives through the compassion of the Lord. Then, after he has rewarded his followers, he will come down to the ground, being followed by those who belong to Jesus.

Our faith is based on this work of salvation, which has been already accomplished, while our hopes hinge on the perfection of our salvation, which will be completed by the Second Coming of Jesus himself. I would like to continue our discussion based on three quick questions.

Firstly, will Jesus truly come back? Secondly, when will Jesus return? And thirdly, what is he coming back for?

The first question was whether Jesus is truly coming back or not. This idea is denied in so-called modern theology and by many churches of today. However, the most important thing is not what humans think or believe, but what the Bible says. No matter how difficult a situation you are facing, instead of trying to find an answer through your own thoughts or knowledge, you should think of what the Bible says about it.

All the prophets in the Old Testament clearly predicted not only the Nativity of the Savior, and his suffering and death, but also the Second Coming of the Lord. It was already stated in the Book of Daniel, chapter 7, verse 13:

Daniel

7:13and look!—someone like the Son of Man was coming, accompanied by heavenly clouds.

It was thus prophesied. The first and the second comings of the Lord were predicted throughout the Old Testament. That is to say, he would first humble himself and come down to this world as a lamb; then he would come back for the second time as the glorious king.

On every page of the New Testament, the Second Coming of the Lord is implicated. Out of 260 total chapters in the New Testament, there are 318 references to the Second Coming of the Lord. Jesus himself has also clearly stated his own return.

John

14:3 And if I am going away to prepare a place for you, I will come back again and welcome you into my presence.

Jesus thus promised this to the disciples of his time. Among the many things he has predicted about the future, let us look at these verses from the Gospel

According to Mark, chapter 24:

Matthew

24:27 because just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

24:30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all 'the tribes of the land will mourn' when they see 'the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven' with power and great glory.

Revelation

3:11 I am coming soon!

This was the word of Jesus himself, who was raised to heaven.

Revelation

22:12 See! I am coming soon!

Not only Jesus himself, the angels of heaven also clearly proclaimed the Second Coming of Jesus:

Acts

1:11 This same Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you saw him go up into heaven.

Jesus will come. And, as we just read, in addition to Jesus himself, the angel from heaven also clearly mentioned the Second Coming. Furthermore, all the apostles left some words about the Second Coming of Jesus:

Philippians

3:20 Our citizenship, however, is in heaven, and it is from there that we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus, the Messiah.

When we think of the Second Coming of Jesus, I suppose that chapter 4, verse 16 of the First Epistle to Thessalonians comes up in the minds of many people:

1 Thessalonians

4:16 With a shout of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of God's trumpet, the Lord himself will come down from heaven.

Jesus will absolutely come back. This very fact is the one and only answer to all questions and problems in this present world. We often say that the greeting shared among believers should be "it will be soon." It shouldn't be too long. Jesus may come in a little while.

He might come today, before the end of this meeting. Then, you will understand why all unpleasant and

difficult things had to happen in your life. "It has been very hard. But, as I found out now, it was necessary for me. It was not just necessary, but it was good for me." You may not be able to think that way now. We cannot help but wonder why, or for what purpose things happen in every aspect of our lives. But, everything is under control of the Lord. There are no accidents in what he does.

There is no, what we call 'destiny.' Jesus will come again. This very fact that Jesus is truly coming back is the sole answer to all problems that occur in this world. Jesus will return and it is our very hope, our very joy. For those who refuse to think of the Second Coming of Jesus, those who are not convinced of it, there is no true joy or true hope. They have nothing to support their lives. Jesus is coming back again and it is a fact which leaves no room for doubt.

The second question: When is Jesus coming back?

Matthew

24:31 He will send out his angels with a loud trumpet blast, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to another.

24:32 Now learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branches become tender and it produces leaves, you know that summer is near.

24:33 In the same way, when you see all these things, you will know that the Son of Man is near, right at the door.

Jesus will come. How will we know it? To begin with, according to the Bible it will be preceded by specific natural phenomena. It is written that there will be famines and earthquakes in various places.

There has never been a time throughout history with so many famines and earthquakes as today. These natural disasters and catastrophic incidents are reminding us not to forget the Second Coming of the Lord. It is also noted that there will be a remarkable change in the people of the world. As is written in Matthew, Chapter 24, "you are going to hear of wars and rumors of wars."

It is written that nation will rise up in arms against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. All the turmoils in the Middle East revolving around Israel are signaling to us that the Lord is coming back soon. Furthermore, we will see a significant change in our religious lives. There has never been a time like this, in which the Bible is criticized and disrespected in many churches.

Wherever we go, we are tempted to compromise with them, accept them, and associate with them, which are, needless to say, the attempts of the devil to lead

us away from the true path. Jesus will come back. Still, everywhere we see indifference, ignorance, idleness and many other signs of corruption of the faith. Let us read again these verses in chapter 24 of Matthew, which are especially meaningful:

Matthew

24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

24:31 He will send out his angels with a loud trumpet blast, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to another.”

24:32 Now learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branches become tender and it produces leaves, you know that summer is near.

24:33 In the same way, when you see all these things, you will know that the Son of Man is near, right at the door.

Needless to say, the most significant sign of all can be found in the people of Israel. When the people of Israel restore their nation and return there to join together again, it is evidence that the Second Coming of the Lord is approaching, according to the Bible.

As I mentioned earlier, the Second Coming of Jesus will occur in two stages. The first stage will be invisible. Then, in the second stage, he will be seen by all people. In one stage, Jesus will come like a thief, while in the other stage, he will come just like a bolt of lightning according to the Bible.

A thief comes when you do not expect it. Paul wrote to the people in Thessaloniki that the day of the Lord will come like a thief during the night. Peter wrote exactly the same thing:

2 Peter

3:10 But the Day of the Lord will come like a thief. On that day the heavens will disappear with a roaring sound, the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done on it will be exposed.

Revelation

3:3 So remember what you received and heard. Obey it, and repent. If you are not alert, I will come like a thief, and you won't know the time when I will come to you.

Jesus will come again. When we think of his forthcoming return, it affects our thoughts and values. It is written that Jesus will come just like a bolt of lightning which can be seen by all people. In his Second Coming, he will come, not as a savior, but as a

judge. The expression “as a bolt of lightning” indicates that he is coming back in order to judge and destroy all evils.

Revelation

1:7 Look! He is coming in the clouds. Every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of him. So be it! Amen.

Jesus will not humble himself anymore, but he will come with great glory. On that day, Jesus will come down to earth; he will be glorified by his saints and be regarded with wonder by all who have believed according to the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, 1:10:

Matthew

24:30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all ‘the tribes of the land will mourn’ when they see ‘the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven’ with power and great glory.

Reading the Bible makes it possible for us to willingly accept and believe in the Rapture. However, the time of grace ends with the Rapture. This is so dreadful. Actually, we are living in a time of grace as can be seen in this verse, “Listen! Now is really the right time! Now is the day of salvation!” Today, anyone can be saved if they sincerely desire salvation. After the Rapture, the time will be different. It will no longer be “the right time.” The time for your judgment will come.

The people in the early churches were delighted when they were convinced that their citizenship was in heaven. After all, if we have the same conviction, we don't have to worry about anything anymore and will be filled with great joy. It will be soon. It won't be long. We feel so blessed when we think of the forthcoming return of Jesus, for then all present troubles and worries will no longer matter. “Do not worry. Do not be anxious. You do not have to fear anymore.” This is the greatest cure of all, isn't it?

End