

The Second Coming

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[0:00] 1 Thessalonians 4, verse 13 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 13 And the dead in Christ shall rise first.

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Wherefore comfort one another with these words. Chapter 5 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief.

Ye are all the children of light and the children of the day. We are not of the night nor of the darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober.

[2:00] For they that sleep, sleep in the night. And they that be drunken, are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love and foreign helmet, the hope of salvation.

For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. The second coming. The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5 verse 1. Of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. There's going to be a shout!

You don't know what he's going to say when he shouts, but there's going to be a shout. Amen? Amen? Amen? And we're going to hear that shout. We're going to hear the voice of an archangel. We're going to hear the, doop-doop!

[3:06] The trump of God. There's someone up there preparing the brass instrument, ready to blow. And it says, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Those that are loved ones who know the Saviour, they're going to rise from the graves, from wherever their body has been scattered.

It's going to come back together again. And then we, which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so shall we ever be with the Lord.

You don't know? It could be just around the corner, brothers and sisters. Amen. And there's great comfort in these words, isn't there? Great comfort. Praise God. And the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

It's going to be, whoa, what happened? It's just going to be so sudden, so unexpected to the world at large. And when they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction shall come upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape.

So, some thoughts around the Lord's second coming today to encourage you, as it says, to comfort, to edify with this hope, this blessed hope in view.

[4:19] And number one is, there's reason for readiness. There's reason for readiness. We're told to be ready, to keep watching. Chapter 5, verse 6, that we should have this event as no surprise to us.

We need to have a readiness to be ever ready, to be ever prepared, ever watching, ever waiting. Therefore, let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober.

But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of the light, and the children of the day. We are not of the night, nor of darkness.

Therefore, let us not sleep, as do others. So, no sleeping this morning in church. But let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night.

That's when you can go to sleep. And they that be drunken, are drunken in the night. But it's talking, of course, about spiritual slumber and sleeping, isn't it? There's a lot of people asleep. You know, they're just lying there.

[5:19] The devil's sort of rocking their little hammock. You know, they're sleeping. They're unprepared. They're not ready. They're not alert, not ready. And this should come as no surprise to us.

The Lord is coming. He's promised it. It's in here. It's foretold. It's forecast. It's something we should be expecting at any moment.

As it says in Titus 2, verse 13, looking for that blessed hope, that happy hope, that joyful hope, and the glorious appearing of our Lord, of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ, looking for that blessed hope.

Are you looking? Have you got those binoculars ready to scour the clouds? He's coming any moment. He's saying, be ready. Be ready. We're meant to be watching, waiting, ready on the alert. And some signs. It tells us here of the signs, of the times, of the times and the seasons. Now, I've got some recent news articles to give you a taste of what's going on.

[6:23] Of course, we all, I'm sure, are aware of what's going on all around us, as it's evident. But just some little news clips that I picked up, really, of recent news, like in the last week or two.

Recently, there's been a little meeting of the Pope and the Patriarch. They met at the Vatican. Pope Benedict XVI and Patriarch Bartholomew I, leaders of the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches. They met in the place where the central core of the Vatican, where they do the decisions about the next Pope and so on.

It's quite an important place in the Vatican. And they condemned fundamentalism and called for religious tolerance. They're talking about Christian fundamentalism. They're talking, they condemn the people that believe this book and obey this book and practice this book and what it says to do and to believe about faith and salvation, about truth.

They condemned those that believe the book, brothers and sisters, because they're not really on the same page. They don't even have the same book anymore, I don't think. Brothers and sisters, there's dangers about in what has been happening in the world's scene, in the church scene, in churchdom.

[7:41] Another news article headed a new global financial order. This is news as of October the 18th.

At a meeting with President Bush at Camp David, President Yosse Manuel Barroso said, We need a global financial order.

After meeting with Barroso and French President Nicolas Sarkozy, Bush announced that he will host an international summit to seek ways to fix the world financial system.

So, if you're worried about your finances, they're going to fix it. We can believe what they tell us. Some want to explore the possibility of creating a world currency.

That would be handy, wouldn't it? And since October the 9th, the stock market has lost more than \$8 trillion. And one world has seen this as an opportunity to push the nations towards further globalism.

[8:47] Wouldn't it be great for the... It's just almost setting the stage for the Antichrist to come, isn't it? Of the one world system, you know, just take this mark and, you know, we don't even need cash anymore, let alone a one world currency.

But we'll all be a one world financial system. It's all gearing that way as we see the signs all around us. Another note here from a Christian source, end time apostasy is Bible doctrine.

Now, some people don't see this. They can't catch this. But in the New Testament, there's many prophecies that they will be a falling away from the truth.

They will be a dangerous trend away from the truth of God's word. The Lord Jesus promises us that believe, he says, Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.

But we're told as many scriptures we could recount about how there's going to be a falling away, there's going to be false teachers, false prophecies, false movements that we need to be very alert

to.

[9:55] I've got many references here, but I won't refer to those directly. But the majority of churches today are moving away.

It's gradualism. It's incrementalism. They're getting away from the sound teaching. And the Lord Jesus says, Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth.

That's how bad it's going to get. That's Luke 18, verse 8, and 2 Timothy 3, verse 13. Paul tells Timothy, But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse.

They're going to grow worse and worse. Deceiving and being deceived. They're not even going to realise they're deceiving because they deceive themselves. Another news article, The Church of England has made an announcement.

They've apologised to Charles Darwin. On September the 14th, even though he's dead, The Church of England officially apologised to Charles Darwin for rejecting his theory of evolution.

[10:53] The statement said, Charles Darwin, 200 years from your birth, the Church of England owes you an apology for misunderstanding you and by getting our reaction wrong, encouraging others to misunderstand you still.

And this was a statement by someone, a high flyer in the Anglican Church who sits on the Archbishop's Council, the Church of England's managing body headed by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Don't they believe the Bible anymore? Oh, did they ever? Friends, it's slurring, isn't it? It's a trend. Now, of course, we're not meaning to bash our Anglican brothers and sisters, those who do truly believe the Bible and have salvation by faith in Christ.

But we're talking about the movement away from truth, the movement away from the Gospel. I'm not standing up here and saying that there's going to be no Anglicans in heaven, but I'm saying there's some very dangerous trends in such movements as that where they're getting away from the Bible truth and apologising for it.

Friends, it's a concern, isn't it? Great concern. And another article, violence against Christians in India. This is a recent article again, October 15.

[12:12] Hindu extremist violence against the Christian community in Orissa State, India, has been continuing since August 24. At least 50 Christians have been murdered.

Some cut to pieces and others burnt alive. These are our brothers and sisters in Christ. Many fear that the death toll is even higher. One estimate suggesting that 120 Christians have been killed. About 18,000 people have been injured. Many of them severely. Numerous Christian women have been raped. Some 4,400 homes have been destroyed. 300 villages have been cleansed of all Christians.

And several orphanages and hundreds of churches and church buildings have been torched and razed. Ground down to the ground. Relief camps where Christians have fled for safety and shelter have been attacked and drinking water has been poisoned.

Over 50,000 Christians are thought to be homeless and around 30,000, more than half of them children, are hiding in the jungle, many without any food and water.

[13:18] Something big is about to happen. Something big is about to happen. The signs of the times, the times and seasons we need to be alert to.

It's hotting up. We don't hear it much here in our fair country where it's easy to be a Christian. Or call yourself one. A lot of people aren't going to be ready.

They're not going to be ready when the Lord comes. It's like our brother shared. They're just playing games, playing church. If the armed guards, armed police come in here and say, OK, are you a real Christian?

Stay here and be slaughtered or you can take the exit door. What are you going to do? When the rubber hits the road, brother and sister. We've got reason.

We've got reason. For readiness, we should have a ready state of heart and mind, of soul, to be prepared. Secondly, we've got reason for restraint.

[14:17] There's reason for restraint in these days, in these dark days. It says in chapter 5, verse 8, that we should be sober. We should keep

sober. We should be sober. For a believer, there should be no darkness.

Chapter 5, verse 5. Of course, it says in the Word, we should have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. There's no place for darkness in the Christian's life, for drunkenness.

Chapter 5, verse 8. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet, a hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

There's reason for restraint in these dark days, these terrifying days, perilous times, as we're told in the book of Timothy. We must be sober and put on the armour of God.

Elsewhere it talks about it as being the armour of light. And something that should set us apart from those who are sleeping, those who are drunken, from those who are in the dark, should be that we identify with Christ, that we are His, that there's an evident Christianity in how we live.

[15:28] We are not of the darkness, but of the day. We belong to the day, to the light. We have a bright hope, that light of the world. The Lord Jesus says, I am the light of the world.

And He says, of you who believe in Christ as your Saviour, ye are the light of the world. All of you. And the light of the world is coming. He is coming back, that light.

And we are the light of the world in these days of darkness and despair. Friends, there's a brighter day coming. There's reason for readiness.

There's reason for restraint. And 2 Peter 1 verse 19, it says, We have a more sure word of prophecy, where unto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.

There's a day coming. And there's a brighter day coming. There's that day of the Lord coming. And friends, shouldn't we have that armour of light? Shouldn't we have that armour, it says there, of the faith, of the love, of the hope, of the salvation?

[16:35] These are heady days today. Heady days. Days of looseness and levity. People are without restraint. Ever so, ever more so. We know, those that have been around for a while, will see how times are changing, aren't they?

What's allowed on television now, as against what was allowed 10 years ago, maybe 5 years ago, what was going on in the world scene, what the media was telling us, what the movies were saying and doing and broadcasting, people are without restraint today.

You know, they might have PG on there, but even that's bad enough, isn't it? Without restraint, without restraint, they're busy partying their way to a devil's hell, drinking themselves stupid, partying, all the way.

And I want to tell you this morning, he's a great DJ. The devil is a great DJ. But the party's over soon. The party's over soon.

And there's going to be a lot of people with a hangover. A lot of people, very sorry. These are days that call for restraint, for people who will be sober, who will be of the day, not of the darkness, who will be of the light, not drunken.

[17:53] We need our wits about us in these days. It calls for restraint. And we that are fathers, mothers, grandparents, our children, our grandchildren, there's great responsibility.

I know, obviously, it's largely the parent of the child, there's responsibility, but you see the influences all around us and we just want to stop them going the wrong way, don't we?

I know, it's in you that believe, there's that concern for loved ones, for friends, for neighbours, as we see what's going on. Think about, there's another little article, the rock and roll philosophy.

The rock and roll philosophy, this article goes, is all about me and what I want. Pop Machine puts it this way, rock and roll is about striking out independently, not caring about your parents' disapproval.

The Rolling Stones said, I am free to do what I want any old time. Ted Nugent said, rock is the total celebration of the physical. Malcolm McLaren said, rock and roll is a pagan and primitive and very jungle.

[19:02] Time magazine said, in a sense, all rock is revolutionary, but it's very beat and sound. It has always implicitly rejected restraints

and has celebrated freedom and sexuality.

Martin Perlick said, rock radicalised teenagers because it estranges them from the traditional virtues which they no longer see as relevant. Darrell Hall of Hall & Oates said, the main purpose of rock and roll is celebration of the self.

David Brinkley in NBC News said, Elvis changed our hairstyles, dress styles, our attitudes towards sex. Robert Palmer said, rock and roll challenged the dominant norms and values with a genuinely Dionysian fervor.

Now, Dionysius, or Bacchus, was the ancient god of wine and debauchery. Tina Turner says, it is naughty. Rock and roll is just one of his tools.

It's just one of the little ways that he gets in people's ears, literally. And it's one of the things that he's about. And we see it's just one of his tentacles that is reaching out to the youth, for our nation, for our world today.

[20:16] Friends, some are blindly groping around in the dark. Drunken, reeling in a stupor, that's how the devil wants people to be. Drunk, drugged, that's how he wants you to be.

The enemy of your soul wants you to be. To have you sleepy, paralytic if you can. Drunk, drugged, dizzy, deluded. How we need a call today for restraint.

We that believe, we shouldn't want to mess with that. We need to be sharp. We need to be alert. We need to be awake. Because there's a campaign of warring against every man, woman and family today.

Philippians 4 verse 5, it says, let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Interesting, those are linked. Moderation, the Lord is at hand.

Moderation, it means modesty, humility, forbearance. The Lord is at hand. We need to, we need to watch ourselves. I need to watch myself. There's still a self here, there's still flesh here.

[21:19] We need to watch. We need to watch to guard. And it's imminent. Anytime now, he's coming back. We need restraint. And further than that, we need to be the restraining influence on our world.

As salt. Like salt. You should be like salt. In your workplaces, your home places, about your daily lives. So, you've got reason. Reason for readiness. You've got reason for restraint.

Called to be restraining influence. And thirdly, you've got a reason for rejoicing. There's great reason for rejoicing, for joy, for joyfulness. Verse 5 verse 11, he tells us, keep encouraging each other.

Keep edifying, keep comforting. For you that believe, it says, chapter 5 verse 9, there's no wrath for you. You're not going to see God's wrath. Isn't that a comforting thought?

I don't want to be on the wrong side of his wrath. Do you? To upset our Lord, our Saviour, it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

[22:20] Wherefore, comfort yourselves together and edify one another, even as also you do. There's a great joy, a great satisfaction. Romans 15 verse 13 says, Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.

There's a reason for hope. They can abound in hope. There's reason for joy, all joy and peace in believing. Think of those words, joy, peace, faith, hope.

There's uplifting, there's comfort, there's encouragement. The Lord's coming isn't something that strikes fear to us. It's not something that causes us consternation. If you're ready, if you're restraining, there's a rejoicing.

And you have his promise. You have his promise today. He's on his way back. It's in black and white in this book. He says, I'm coming back.

I will come again and I will prepare a place for you and I will come again and receive you to myself. You have his promise. He's on his way back. He's come once.

[23:26] The second time, he's going to come as the all-conquering, victorious one, the rightful owner and king of planet earth. And he's preparing a place for you. His promise is the promise of one who cannot lie.

His promise is the promise of one who cannot lie. Now, I don't know whether you've been around a bit and people have promised you different things. People have promised me various things and they don't always deliver on the promise.

You know, people may be well-meaning. They say, I'm going to do this or pay that or do what or do that and they don't end up doing it. But I want to tell you the promise of this one is not going to fail. You've got the promise of one who cannot lie. His promise is one that you can put your heart's trust in. We have the word of the king. In Ecclesiastes 8 verse 4 it says, Where the word of a king is, there is power.

There's power here. There's power in this book and this promise. He's coming back. And his word is dependable for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, with the trump of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

[24:35] He says it's going to happen. Amen. It's going to happen. We don't know when. I don't know whether we're going to see this day through before it happens. It could be any moment. And it says 2 Thessalonians 1 verse 7 to 10, And to you who are troubled, rest with us.

We are troubled. These are days of trouble. The media is, I think, stirring trouble and panic. You know, the people who seem to have it all together are falling to pieces because this world is troubled.

And he says, To you who are troubled, rest with us when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power when he shall come to be glorified in his saints and to be admired in all them that believe.

That's going to be a great day, isn't it? Amen. Amen. And the king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion but his favour is as due upon the grass.

That's Proverbs 19, verse 12. The king's wrath is like the roaring of a lion but his favour is as due upon the grass. Which one do you know? Wouldn't you rather have the favour of our God?

[25:50] His favour, His grace, His unmerited favour, His mercy at the cross in dying, in offering His free gift and you receiving it by faith. There's mercy, there's favour and it's like dew upon the grass.

It's lovely, isn't it? To get up in the morning and the dew's on the grass. It's just beautiful. And in these dry days you don't see a lot of that but when we see that dew it's beautiful, isn't it? And that's like the favour of our king and yet the roaring of a lion is like Israel.

And friends, it says that he's going to be admired in all them that believe. There's going to be a crown for all them that love his appearing. I know Don loves his appearing so there must be an angel up there polishing Don's crown because Don loves the Lord's appearing.

He's looking forward to their second coming. I can't keep him quiet about it. But friends, that should be true for all of you here today. That you're looking forward, you're loving his appearing, you're longing for it, you're dying for it.

It's something you just want to jump for joy knowing that it's just around the corner and you can't hardly wait. And the imminent coming of our Lord is called the blessed hope.

[27:00] It's something that gives us blessing. Blessed means happy. It's a joyful thing. It's reason for rejoicing today. Friends, just to close, you've got great reason for joy, for joyfulness, the happy hope, the blessed hope of his soon coming, of his returning.

It's a reason for our comforting and edifying one another, of telling others, Christ is coming, are you ready? Friends, please, there's reason for readiness. Are you ready?

Are you identifying with Christ? Are you setting that goal, having that love of him, that identification with him? Do you belong to him? Or are you just part of the crowd this morning?

You're not really his. Friends, don't be toying with Christianity. Make Christ your goal. Make Christ your saviour. Make him your love. Give him your heart today. There's readiness needed.

There's restraint needed. Days of despair, of a lack of restraint, of a world that's largely partying and drunken and lost. Friends, be a part of the restraining influence of that soul.

[28:02] While there's time, and have that rejoicing in your heart. If you know him, you have a blessed hope. You have a certain hope. It's a sure and certain thing. And you can expect his coming soon.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for each one gathered. Lord, for our time, for our fellowship. Lord God, we praise you that in Christ we have that great assurance of salvation, not through any workings of our own, not through any affiliation of any kind other than an identification with you and what you have done for us.

Lord, that you identified with us at the cross in taking our very sin there and paying for it in full. We receive that gift on our behalf. We thank you, Lord, that we can live lives that are pleasing, lives that are in your hand and lives that are looking forward to that return.

Help us, Lord. Find us ready, we pray. Help us to be ever ready in the light of your coming soon and telling others too that we might share that message, we pray.

In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.