

September 6, 2026

The Second Coming of Christ:
“Delivered from God’s Wrath”

1 Thessalonians 1

Pastor Gary Hamrick



The book of 1 Thessalonians deals with a major theme: the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. In this five-part series, we will discuss how each chapter ends with an aspect of the Lord’s return and that we should all be living in the constant expectation of the imminent return of the Lord. Come learn from 1 Thessalonians 1:10 about how we will be “delivered . . . from the wrath to come” (KJV).

1. Context

a. Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians

- i. Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians around 51 A.D. from Corinth while on his second missionary journey.
- ii. This letter was written to the church in Thessalonica, which was primarily made up of Gentile Believers (**Acts 17:4**).

b. The city of Thessalonica

i. Thessalonica now

1. Thessalonica’s modern name is Thessaloniki.
2. The city is home to 300,000 people.
3. The region of Thessaloniki has a population of 800,000 people.

ii. Thessalonica in Paul’s day

1. The city was originally called Therma, because of its hot springs.
2. Later, Therma was renamed Thessalonica after Alexander the Great’s half-sister, Thessalonike.
3. Thessalonica had a population of 200,000 people, which was considered a large city at that time.
4. Thessalonica was an important port city along the Aegean Sea.

2. **1 Thessalonians 1:1-10** – “[1] Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. [2] We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, [3] remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, [4] knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. [5] For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake. [6] And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, [7] so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. [8]

For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. [9] For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, [10] and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.”

- a. Paul’s traveling companions
 - i. Silvanus and Timothy traveled with Paul on missions.
 - ii. “Silvanus” is also called “Silas” in other Bible translations (verse 1).

3. Paul’s commendations

- a. Paul commended the Thessalonians for (verse 3):
 - i. Their work of faith
 - ii. Their labor of love
 - iii. Their patience of hope
- b. Paul commended their good example and reputation.
 - i. The Thessalonians were an example to the Believers around them (verse 7).
 - 1. Achai and Macedonia were provinces in Northern and Southern Greece.
 - 2. **DISCUSS:** Are you being a good example for other Believers, encouraging them with your life to live for Christ? In what way can you set a better example?
 - ii. Their reputation preceded them (verse 8).
 - 1. **DISCUSS:** What are you known for? How far and wide is your reputation known and what impact does that have for the kingdom of heaven?

4. The second coming of Christ

- a. Every chapter in 1 Thessalonians ends with a reference to Jesus’ return.
 - i. **1 Thessalonians 1:10** – “Wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.”
 - ii. **1 Thessalonians 2:19–20** – “[19] What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? [20] For you are our glory and joy.”
 - iii. **1 Thessalonians 3:12–13** – “[12] May the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, [13] so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.”

- iv. **1 Thessalonians 4:16–18** – “[16] The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. [17] Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. [18] Therefore comfort one another with these words.”
- v. **1 Thessalonians 5:23** – “May the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

b. Book outline

- i. Chapter 1
 - 1. We are delivered from God’s wrath.
- ii. Chapter 2
 - 1. We have reasons to rejoice when we see Jesus.
- iii. Chapter 3
 - 1. We should be loving others while waiting for Christ’s return.
- iv. Chapter 4
 - 1. We should be ready for the rapture.
- v. Chapter 5
 - 1. We find our spirit, soul, and body transformed in Christ.

5. Jesus’ coming

a. Jesus’ first coming

- i. Jesus lived, was crucified, and was buried.
- ii. He rose from the dead three days later in His glorified body.
- iii. He appeared to His followers over 40 days, giving many convincing proofs.
- iv. He ascended to heaven, His followers looking on.

b. Jesus’ second coming

- i. The angels comforted the disciples with the promise that Jesus would return to the Mount of Olives east of Jerusalem.
 - 1. **Acts 1:1–3, 9–11** – “[1] The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, [2] until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, [3] to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. . . . [9] Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. [10] And while they looked steadfastly toward

heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, [11] who also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.'"

- a. The "former account" which Luke wrote to Theophilus (verse 1) is a reference to the Gospel of Luke.
- b. The two men in white (verse 10) are angels.
2. The early church lived with this expectation of imminent return.
- ii. Jesus also spoke of His second coming.
 1. **Matthew 24:30** – "The sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."
 2. **John 14:2-3** – "[2] In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. [3] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."
- iii. The New Testament writers testified of Jesus' second coming.
 1. **Hebrews 9:28** – "Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation."
 2. **Titus 2:13** – We are "looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ."
 3. **2 Peter 3:9-10** – "[9] The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. [10] But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up."
 4. **Revelation 1:7** – "Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen."
- iv. **DISCUSS:** Do you believe in the second coming? How does the promised return of Christ comfort you?

6. Belief in Jesus' second coming

- a. Christians throughout the ages have believed in Jesus' imminent return.

- i. Justin Martyr, who lived from 90–165 A.D., wrote about Christ's coming.
 - ii. Jerome, who lived from 342–420 A.D., wrote about it.
 - iii. George Whitfield, the great evangelist of the 1700s, said "And now, brethren, into God's hands I commend your spirits who, I trust, through his infinite mercies in Christ Jesus, will preserve you blameless, till his second coming to judge the world."
- b. According to a Pew Research Center 2012 survey, 55 percent of American adults believe that Jesus will return to earth someday.
 - i. Who believes Jesus will return among religious groups?
 - 1. 92 percent of Evangelical Protestants
 - 2. 86 percent of Historically Black Churches
 - 3. 64 percent of mainline Protestants
 - 4. 63 percent of Catholics
 - ii. Who believes Jesus will return among party affiliations?
 - 1. 69 percent of Republicans
 - 2. 45 percent of Democrats
 - iii. Who believes Jesus will return among education levels?
 - 1. 65 percent of people with a high school education or less
 - 2. 57 percent of people with some college education
 - 3. 48 percent of college graduates

7. The timing of Jesus' second coming

- a. Only the Father knows the day Jesus is coming again.
 - i. **Matthew 24:36** – *"Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only."*
 - ii. **Matthew 24:44** – *"You also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."*
 - 1. **DISCUSS:** Why do you think that the timing of Jesus' coming is only known to the Father? What would happen if everyone knew the day and hour when Jesus would come again?
- b. But we can identify the signs of the times.
 - i. It is important we try to know the signs of the times.
 - 1. Jesus prophesied against the temple because they did not recognize the time of God's coming to them (**Luke 19:44**).
 - 2. The Romans came against Jerusalem and destroyed the temple in 70 A.D., not leaving one stone upon another.
 - 3. The stones are still there as a reminder of what happened.
 - 4. We must not be guilty of the same sin.
 - ii. God used the Jewish feasts to point us to parts of the prophetic timeline.

1. Many of these feasts were already fulfilled in Christ.
 - a. Jesus was crucified during Passover.
 - b. He was buried during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
 - c. He rose during the Feast of Firstfruits.
 - d. He sent the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.
 2. The Feast of Trumpets alone has yet to be fulfilled because the rapture is the next event in the prophetic timeline.
 - a. **1 Thessalonians 4:16** – *“The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.”*
 - iii. There is nothing left to be fulfilled before the rapture, so we live with the constant expectancy of Christ’s imminent return.
 1. If we lived with Jesus’ coming in mind, we would sin less and live for Him more.
 2. **DISCUSS:** What does Jesus want you to let go? What behavior or way of thinking does He want you to replace that sin with?
8. **1 Thessalonians 1:10** – *“Wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.”*
- a. What we deserve
 - i. All of us are sinners who deserve God’s wrath.
 1. Wrath is God’s divine judgment on man’s sinfulness.
 2. God’s wrath against sin is both personal and global.
 - ii. God’s personal wrath is poured out on each individual sinner.
 1. We cannot do good to outweigh our sin.
 2. By ourselves, we cannot undo our sin nature.
 3. Hell is for those who stand in rebellion against God.
 4. If God ignored our sin, He would not be the just and holy Judge of all the earth.
 - iii. God’s global wrath is poured out on a sinful world.
 1. During the tribulation, Jesus will pour out His wrath on a God-forsaking world.
 2. The tribulation lasts seven years, and the last three-and-a-half years are known as the great tribulation.
 3. In those days, God will send cataclysmic events, plagues, meteor showers, demons, economic collapse, and more.
 - b. What we receive
 - i. All of us can be delivered from God’s wrath.
 1. Jesus satisfied God’s wrath on the cross on our behalf.
 2. Heaven is for those who’ve trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior.

3. Believers will not face God's personal or global wrath.
 - a. We are delivered from God's personal wrath when we are saved.
 - b. We are delivered from God's global wrath when we are raptured before tribulation comes upon the world.
 - c. People can be saved during the tribulation, but they will face great persecution.
4. **DISCUSS:** Have you been rescued from God's wrath? How do you know?
- ii. Some Christians believe we will go through some or all of the tribulation.
- iii. But as pre-tribulation Believers, we do not think that Christians go through the seven years of God's wrath on the world.
 1. **Luke 17:26–30** – “[26] As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: [27] They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. [28] Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; [29] but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. [30] Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.”
 - a. Noah and Lot were righteous men living in unrighteous times.
 - b. Just as God rescued the remnant in the days of Noah and Lot, He will rescue His bride in the last days.
 2. **1 Thessalonians 5:1, 9–11** – “[1] Concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. . . . [9] For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, [10] who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. [11] Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.”
 - a. If we were to suffer through the time of wrath, we would not “comfort each other” with that message (verse 11).
 - b. **DISCUSS:** How are you edifying other Believers with the promise of Jesus' return?

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)