



# **ANTICIPATE!**

**LOOKING FORWARD TO CHRIST'S RETURN**

**A STUDY THROUGH 1 THESSALONIANS**

# ROMANS 8

**On Fridays, we're going to take a look at our blessed hope from a 30,000-foot view. What exactly are we looking forward to? Over the first three Fridays of this study, we'll read three passages that are central to Christian eschatology (the study of what the Bible says is going to happen in the end times), Romans 8, 1 Corinthians 15, and Revelation 21-22.**

## LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

<sup>1</sup> There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup> For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. <sup>5</sup> For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup> For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. <sup>8</sup> Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup> You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

## HEIRS WITH CHRIST

<sup>12</sup> So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. <sup>13</sup> For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. <sup>14</sup> For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. <sup>15</sup> For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup> and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

## FUTURE GLORY

<sup>18</sup> For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. <sup>19</sup> For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. <sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. <sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. <sup>23</sup> And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. <sup>24</sup> For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.



<sup>26</sup> Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. <sup>27</sup> And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

<sup>28</sup> And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup> For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. <sup>30</sup> And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

## GOD'S EVERLASTING LOVE

<sup>31</sup> What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? <sup>33</sup> Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup> Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. <sup>35</sup> Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? <sup>36</sup> As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

<sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

<sup>38</sup> For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

# THE RESURRECTION BODY

On Fridays, we're taking a look at our blessed hope from a 30,000-foot view. What exactly are we looking forward to? Over the first three Fridays of this study, we're reading three passages that are central to Christian eschatology, Romans 8, 1 Corinthians 15, and Revelation 21-22.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 15:35-58

<sup>35</sup> But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?"<sup>36</sup> You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.<sup>37</sup> And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.<sup>38</sup> But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.<sup>39</sup> For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish.<sup>40</sup> There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another.<sup>41</sup> There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

<sup>42</sup> So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable.<sup>43</sup> It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.<sup>44</sup> It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.<sup>45</sup> Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.<sup>46</sup> But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual.<sup>47</sup> The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.<sup>48</sup> As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven.<sup>49</sup> Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

## MYSTERY AND VICTORY

<sup>50</sup> I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.<sup>51</sup> Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,<sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.<sup>53</sup> For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.<sup>54</sup> When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

"Death is swallowed up in victory."

<sup>55</sup> "O death, where is your victory?  
O death, where is your sting?"

<sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.<sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>58</sup> Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

# THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH

On Fridays, we're taking a look at our blessed hope from a 30,000-foot view. What exactly are we looking forward to? Over the first three Fridays of this study, we're reading three passages that are central to Christian eschatology, Romans 8, 1 Corinthians 15, and Revelation 21-22.

## REVELATION 21-22

**21** <sup>1</sup> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

<sup>5</sup> And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." <sup>6</sup> And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. <sup>7</sup> The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. <sup>8</sup> But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

## THE NEW JERUSALEM

<sup>9</sup> Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." <sup>10</sup> And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, <sup>11</sup> having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. <sup>12</sup> It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed—<sup>13</sup> on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. <sup>14</sup> And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

<sup>15</sup> And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. <sup>16</sup> The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, <sup>17</sup> 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. <sup>18</sup> He also measured its wall, <sup>19</sup> 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement. <sup>20</sup> The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. <sup>21</sup> The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, <sup>22</sup> the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysolite, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. <sup>23</sup> And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

<sup>24</sup> And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. <sup>25</sup> And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

<sup>24</sup> By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, <sup>25</sup> and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup> They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. <sup>27</sup> But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

## THE RIVER OF LIFE

**22**<sup>1</sup> Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup> No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. <sup>4</sup> They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

## JESUS IS COMING

<sup>6</sup> And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.”

<sup>7</sup> “And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

<sup>8</sup> I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, <sup>9</sup> but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”

<sup>10</sup> And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. <sup>11</sup> Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.”

<sup>12</sup> “Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done.

<sup>13</sup> I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

<sup>14</sup> Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. <sup>15</sup> Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

<sup>16</sup> “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

<sup>17</sup> The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

<sup>18</sup> I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, <sup>19</sup> and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

<sup>20</sup> He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

<sup>21</sup> The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

# THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

**On Fridays, we're looking at our blessed hope from a 30,000-foot view. What exactly are we looking forward to? Today: the new heaven and new earth.**

**Through Christ and His finished work, God accomplished more than securing personal salvation and transformation for believers and creating the church. Far more!** Through His death, burial, and victorious resurrection Jesus defeated Satan, sin, and death. The scope of the cosmic victory Christ has won and the redemption He purchased with His blood is immense. It's deeper and wider (to quote a certain children's song) than many of us know. One component is that there will be a curse-reversing redemption of not just our bodies but our "embodied" experience of life and fellowship with God, **ultimately** in the new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21:1-2). **Ultimately**, our blessed hope includes the renewal of the earth and every good thing that it contains. That's what Romans 8:19-21 is talking about:

*<sup>19</sup> For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. <sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. (Rom. 8:19-21)*

I think there's great value in stepping back and asking the question, "when everything has happened that the Bible says it to happen, how will everything be?" When that day arrives, we're going to dwell in the new heaven and new earth in glorified, resurrection bodies. We will be immortal, living eternal lives of joyful holiness (and wholeness) in an incorruptible world that God will have remade (redeemed, renewed, restored). That's going to be something else! Here are a few things we can look forward to there.

**1.** The new heaven and new earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

*<sup>14</sup> For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (Habakkuk 2:14) (See also Num. 14:21, Psa. 72:19, and Isa. 6:3 and 11:9)*

**2.** Righteousness dwells in the eternal home of those made righteous in Christ.

In 2 Peter 3, Peter wrote about the events of the coming Day of the Lord, laying out the cosmic judgment and destruction that are attached to that terrible day:

- "(The) heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly" (v.7).
- "(The) heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed" (v.10).
- "(The) heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!" (v.12)

Then he closes his thought by pivoting to say, “But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (v.13). Our **ultimate** hope is the promise that God will finally bring us to the day of the new heavens and new earth. (See Isa. 65:17, 66:22; Rev. 21:1-22:5)

**3. God’s kingdom will be fully enacted and King Jesus will rule over all.**

When Jesus began his ministry, “(He) came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” (Mk. 1:14-15). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught His disciples to pray, “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Mt. 6:10). **Jesus came to bring God’s kingdom to bear on the earth and everything in it. In the end, He wins!** So, in the full and final salvation we look forward to, God’s kingdom is fully inaugurated and enacted in the new heavens and new earth. When that day arrives, we will live happily in heavenly citizenship under the rule of our great King, King Jesus!

- 4.** The key word I’ve bolded several times is “**ultimately**”. A lot will occur between now and the day where the new heaven and new earth are our home; this is where the Bible’s storyline ends. When we’re there, we’ll lack nothing and want for nothing. Until then, “our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself” (Phil. 3:20-21).



# GLORIFIED RESURRECTION BODIES!

On Fridays, we're looking at our blessed hope from a 30,000-foot view. What exactly are we looking forward to? Today: glorified resurrection bodies!

In 1 Corinthians 15, we have these wonderful three verses about exchanging our perishable bodies for imperishable ones.

<sup>51</sup> Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, <sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. <sup>53</sup> For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. (1 Cor.15:51-53)

Our life in this world involves swimming in and through the sin-cursed effects of the fall in the garden (Genesis 1-3) and the resulting destruction of God's good created order. But as it says in 1 Corinthians 15, one day we shall all be changed. Creation and the created order will be renewed and we will receive resurrection bodies that much more fully reflect the glorified Christ, the perfect image of the invisible God. When that comes about, "death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. (Rev 21:4)" Here's what Augustine had to say about our lives after that point (way back in 426 AD.)

How great shall be that felicity [in the City of God], which shall be tainted with no evil, which shall lack no good, and which shall afford leisure for the praises of God, who shall be all in all! ... All the members and organs of the incorruptible body, which now we see to be suited to various necessary uses, shall contribute to the praises of God. ... What power of movement such bodies shall possess, I have not the audacity rashly to define, as I have not the ability to conceive. Nevertheless I will say that in any case, both in motion and at rest, they shall be, as in their appearance, seemly; for into that state nothing which is unseemly shall be admitted. **God Himself, who is the Author of virtue, shall there be its reward; for, as there is nothing greater or better, He has promised Himself... He shall be the end of our desires who shall be seen without end, loved without cloy, praised without weariness. This outgoing of affection, this employment, shall certainly be, like eternal life itself, common to all.**

Augustine, The City of God, XXII.30, trans. Marcus Dods (Random House, 1950), 864–65 and quoted in Matt and Jared Wilson, The Explicit Gospel, Crossway, 2012. (p 168).

# ESCHATOLOGY

**On Fridays, we're looking at our blessed hope from a 30,000-foot view. What exactly are we looking forward to? Today we're taking a step back to see the big picture.**

Eschatology is the study of the last things as they are revealed in Scripture. Christians have different understandings in this area and for some, the details can get fuzzy. Rather than being encouraged, some become confused or frustrated. However, I think that's unnecessary if you begin with a big picture view and then work down to the details from there.

Eschatology has three main subject headings. Everything involved connects to one of the three:

- Physical death and the intermediate state
- The second coming of Christ
- Ultimate human destiny

## PHYSICAL DEATH AND THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

Death comes to all of us. "It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment" (Heb. 9:27). Death is significant and holds meaning, just as life is significant and holds meaning.

- Death is a result of the Fall, and along with sin it spread to the whole human race. Death is the recompense humanity receives for sin, beginning with Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:17, Rom. 6:23). At death, the body and soul are separated with the soul continuing to live on and the body lifeless, inert (Gen. 3:19).
- Death is final regarding our opportunity to repent and believe in Christ (Heb. 9:27) but is not the final punishment for sin. For those who reject the grace of God in Christ, everlasting punishment awaits (Matt. 25:46, 2 Thess. 1:9, Rev. 21:8).
- Death is the final step in the believer's sanctification (Phil. 1:23, 2 Cor. 5:8).

The intermediate state is the term we use to describe what happens between death and the return of Christ. The question, "Where will I be and what will I be conscious of two minutes after I die?" is a question about the intermediate state.

- Upon death, the souls of those who reject the grace of God in Christ go immediately into eternal punishment. There will be a reuniting of soul and body for the day of final judgment after the return of Christ (Matt. 25:31-46, Jn. 5:28-29, Acts 24:15, Rev. 20:12).
- Upon death, Christians' souls immediately enter God's presence (2 Cor. 5:8, Phil. 1:23). While death ushers in final sanctification, the glorification of which Paul spoke in Romans 8:30 awaits Christ's return. Until then, we await "the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope, we were saved" (Rom. 8:23-24).

## ULTIMATE HUMAN DESTINY

Daniel, Jesus, and Paul each spoke of the bodily resurrection of the just/righteous and the unjust/wicked before final judgment (Dan. 12:2, Jn. 5:28-29, Acts 24:15). Revelation 20:4-5 separates the resurrection of the dead in Christ from the resurrection of the rest of the dead, with the dead in Christ raised at the onset of the thousand-year reign of Christ (millennium), and the rest of the dead raised after it.

After the thousand-year reign of Christ and the final defeat of Satan and his army, Jesus Christ will judge all mankind from his “great white throne” (Rev. 20:11-15). This day of final judgment is the “day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed” (Rom. 2:5). “(God) has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).

In the final judgment, God’s simultaneous demonstration of justice and mercy will display his glory to all mankind. God will judge “impartially according to each one’s deeds” (1 Pet. 17). After judgment, hell is the final destiny of the unjust/wicked (Rom. 2:8, Rev. 20:12) and heaven is the final destiny of the just/righteous.

Some think of heaven as a disembodied experience singularly focused on worship around the throne of God or, perhaps, floating around on clouds. The biblical version of this kind of thinking comes from the intermediate state when our souls and bodies are separated by death, until Christ returns. You could think of it as “intermediate heaven.” (There’s no “cloud floating” in intermediate heaven, sorry!) However, in “final/ultimate heaven,” which will come after Christ’s return and final judgment, we will experience eternal, joyfully holy life in the new heaven and new earth. Then, in glorified and immortal bodies (reunited with our souls when Christ returns) we will live in God’s presence under King Jesus’ rule and reign.

## **THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST**

I put the second coming last to make this point; many of the things people find fuzzy, confusing, or frustrating when it comes to eschatology relate to the second coming.

- How’s the rapture going to work? Will it be pre-trib, mid-trib, or post-trib (trib being the seven years of tribulation Scripture foresees)?
- Will the return of Christ be premillennial, postmillennial, or amillennial (the Millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ foretold in Revelation 20)?
- What about Israel and Christian Zionism? What role do the Jews play in the timing of the second coming and what about the 144,000 in Revelation?

So what do we do about all of that? How should we think of the second coming? We’ll take that up next week. It should be an encouraging way to finish things up.

# THEREFORE ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER WITH THESE WORDS.

On Fridays, we've been looking at our blessed hope from a 30,000-foot view. What exactly are we looking forward to? Today we'll wrap things up.

## 1 THESS 4:18

Last Friday, we finished up with questions about the second coming, asking, "So what do we do about all of that? How should we think of the second coming?"

At the risk of being simplistic, I think the answer is to be solid in and encouraged by what is clearly revealed in Scripture and then live in joyful expectation of His imminent return. Nothing more was involved for the Thessalonians and others in the early church and need not be for us. For some, that answer won't satisfy because it leaves important theological questions unaddressed. If that's where you're at, I encourage you to do what I'm suggesting here and add to it continued study of Scripture along with solid resources to guide you into a deeper, more settled understanding.

Since the following three things are true, let's be diligent to live in light of His imminent return!

1. The return of Christ is near. We're meant to take that to heart, and "love His appearing."

<sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. <sup>8</sup> Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me **but also to all who have loved his appearing.** (2 Tim. 4:7-8)

<sup>20</sup> The God of peace will **soon** crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. (Rom. 16:20)

<sup>11</sup> Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. **For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.** <sup>12</sup> **The night is far gone; the day is at hand.** So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. (Rom. 13:11-12)

<sup>23</sup> Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup> And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, **and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.** (Heb. 10:23-25)



<sup>7</sup> Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. <sup>8</sup> You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, **for the coming of the Lord is at hand.** (Jam. 5:7-8)

<sup>7</sup> **The end of all things is at hand;** therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. <sup>8</sup> Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. (1 Pet.4:7-8)

<sup>3</sup> Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, **for the time is near.** (Rev.1:3)

<sup>10</sup> And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. <sup>11</sup> Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.”

<sup>12</sup> **“Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done.”** <sup>13</sup> I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

<sup>14</sup> Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. (Rev.22:10-14)

<sup>20</sup> **He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.”** Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

<sup>21</sup> The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen. (Rev.22:20-21)

2. While the secret things belong to the Lord and we do not know the time of His return, we are to live on guard, awake, and alert regarding his coming.

<sup>29</sup> **“The secret things belong to the Lord our God,** but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law. (Deut.29:29)

<sup>32</sup> “But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>33</sup> **Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come.** <sup>34</sup> It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. <sup>35</sup> **Therefore stay awake**—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning—

<sup>36</sup> **lest he come suddenly and find you asleep.** <sup>37</sup> **And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.”** (Mk.13:32-37)

3. The Lord doesn't mark time in the way we do. His delay in coming displays His wisdom and patience and presents an ongoing impetus for evangelism. He "is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" (1 Pet. 3:9).

<sup>8</sup> *But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.* <sup>9</sup> **The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.**

<sup>10</sup> **But the day of the Lord will come like a thief,** and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

<sup>11</sup> *Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,* <sup>12</sup> **waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God,** because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!<sup>13</sup> **But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.** (2 Pet. 3:8-13)