

A Bird's-Eye View for Me and You 2nd Thessalonians

I'm happy you could join me today for "It's a Good Life." This is Lewis Woodard, and let me remind you that you can write to me, Lewis Woodard, 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, Florida 34731, and I'll be glad to send you an outline, a transcript of the program you're hearing today. Now, if you go to our website, www.LRWM.org, you'll be able to download a transcript or write to me from that website, and I'll be glad to send you free of charge a transcript of this program and other programs of "It's a Good Life." You can also go to the website and hear this program, this broadcast, and other broadcasts of "It's a Good Life." That's www.LRWM.org. If you'll go there today and send me an email, and there's a place on there where you can send prayer requests. I'll be glad to pray with you on any prayer that you have, any request that you have that you'd like to share with me. I'll be glad to share that with the Lord.

Well, today, we're going to continue our study of "A Bird's-Eye View for Me and You," the books of the New Testament. We're already up to study number fourteen, and this is 2nd Thessalonians. Let me remind you that we're not going in depth on these studies. I'm simply trying to give you a bird's-eye view to help you think your way through the New Testament.

Now, the background for the book, 2nd Thessalonians, Paul the apostle was the author. Silas and Timothy were Paul's fellow helpers. In chapter 1 and verse 1, it says, *Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* Now, you see that word "Silvanus," that's Silas. That's another name for Silas.

And the authority by which 2nd Thessalonians was written is from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Chapter 1, verse 2, says, *Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus*

Christ. Sometimes, as human beings, we look at the author who is Paul the apostle here and some people would say, well, there's a human author involved in this and so how can we believe this. Well, Paul makes it clear that he's not writing down simply to be writing or thinking that he's writing just the things that he wants to write. And he gives the authority by which he's writing these things. He says, *Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* He's writing under the authority and inspiration of God.

The date of this letter and both letters to the Thessalonians, first and second, was soon after A.D. 50, and the setting here is Thessalonica, and it was the chief city in the Roman province here.

And the key verses, I believe, here are 2nd Thessalonians chapter 1, verse 11, through chapter 2 and verse 2. It says in chapter 1, verses 11-12, ¹¹*Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: ¹²That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

And then in chapter 2, verses 1-2, it says, ¹*Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, ²That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.*

As we look at 2nd Thessalonians and all these books that we've been studying to this point, I often emphasize that a person needs to get saved, and that's true. People need to know Jesus as Savior. Paul is not only writing to help others come to a saving knowledge of Jesus, but I would have you

know that he is writing to the churches here. He's writing to save people. He's admonishing people as to how they should live and what they should be doing with their Christian life. In these books, we can look at them, the New Testament, and we can look at 2nd Thessalonians here, and we can see that the admonition that Paul is giving actually touches us today, that we are to learn from His Word, from God's Word. We are to study to show ourselves approved, workmen that needeth not to be ashamed.

Well, the purpose of the book is this, I believe. The first epistle, 1st Thessalonians, was written to comfort the Thessalonians on account of those who had fallen asleep, or who had died, and to make known the great revelation concerning the coming of the Lord for His saints, not the second coming, but the rapture of the church. He's coming back for those of us who have trusted Him as Savior. The Bible talks about that in 1st Thessalonians. He's also writing to let them know that the day of the Lord, the tribulation, had not started, and Paul uses the epistle of 2nd Thessalonians to set things straight about the second coming of the Lord. There's a difference here. He's talking in 1st Thessalonians about the rapture of the church, how that Christ is coming back. And the Bible teaches us that He's coming back with a shout. He's coming back and it says with the voice of the archangel, and he will say, "Come up hither." And those of us who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them who have gone on before to be with the Lord forever.

But the Bible also talks about the tribulation and then comes the second coming of the Lord, and he's trying to get this straight in their minds. The second chapter of 2nd Thessalonians seems to indicate that the believers were troubled by someone who was trying to convince them that the day of the Lord, that's the tribulation with its threatened judgments, was actually present, it was going on there. Now, I've heard people say that today. "Oh, we're already in the tribulation. Look at the shape the world's in." Well, let me say this, that you haven't seen

anything. You haven't seen anything until you read the Word of God and you understand that we haven't seen anything yet. And thank God, I won't see it, and if you've trusted Him as your Savior, you won't see it, the tribulation. At least, we won't be here suffering and going through it. The tribulation is not at hand, and this is what Paul is trying to tell these people at Thessalonica in 2nd Thessalonians.

Certain false teachers had evidently shown up there, and these false teachers were telling the believers that their hope was vain and that the day of the Lord was actually upon them. Things were bad. Things were so bad that this must be the tribulation they're talking about. And they, no doubt, were scared, these Thessalonians in this church that the threatened tribulation and judgment had begun and that they had to pass through all the horrors of the times preceding the visible manifestation of the Lord. And we know that, of course, by reading and studying the Word of God that the day of the Lord, the tribulation, had not started, and Paul uses the epistle of 2nd Thessalonians to comfort those in the church at Thessalonica.

And let me comfort you today and let you understand that things may be bad, but it's not the tribulation yet. And we haven't been caught up together with Him in the clouds. We haven't been changed. Our bodies have not been changed to be fashioned like His as of yet. So the tribulation has not started. His second coming has not taken place and it won't take place until after we are raptured out of this world as saved people.

Well, there's an outline of this book I'd like to briefly go through. The outline, first of all, is God's righteous judgment on those who have afflicted and on those who have been afflicted. In other words, those who have caused a problem and those who have had the problems caused to them. There's a judgment coming that Paul is talking about here in 2nd Thessalonians chapter 1, verses 3-12. And then at least two things must precede the second coming of Christ. Christ is coming back. First of all, He's

coming back to receive us up into the clouds to go with Him as the rapture of the church takes place. Then, the second coming will happen approximately seven years later after the tribulation. And at least two things must precede the second coming of Christ, according to 2nd Thessalonians chapter 2, verses 1-12. First of all, there will be a falling away. 2nd Thessalonians chapter 2 and verse 3 talks about this. And then the man of sin must be revealed, 2nd Thessalonians chapter 2 verses 3-4. Let's read those verses right now.

Chapter 2 and verse 3 says, *Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come.... that's the tribulation period....except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.... the Antichrist.* It hasn't happened. It hasn't happened, so therefore, we know that the second coming of Christ is not at hand. It's not here. Let me remind you, before it happens, we who are alive, we who have named the name of Christ and those who have gone on before us who named Jesus as Savior in this age that we call the church age, we'll all be caught up together with Christ in the clouds to be with Him forever. Our vile bodies will be changed, fashioned like His at the rapture of the church. Paul also tells these people, and he's telling us today, to stand firm and hold to the teachings of the Word of God. Second Thessalonians 2:13-17 talks about that. And Paul says that we are not be idle. Second Thessalonians chapter 3, verses 6-15, talks about that. We are to be working for our Savior.

And then Paul's closing remarks in 2nd Thessalonians chapter 3, verses 16-18. He says this: *Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.* You know, Paul the apostle was a writer. He was a man who knew how to deal with people. He knew how to comfort people. He knew how to help these people in the Thessalonian church here. He knows how to help us today, how the Word of God can reach into our hearts, and he says, *Now the Lord of peace himself....the Lord of peace himself give you*

peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all. Verse 17, chapter 3, says, *The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.* ¹⁸*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

Isn't it wonderful to know that Jesus can comfort our hearts today. We are comforted knowing that He is the Great Comforter. He says take His yoke upon us and it'll be light. He didn't say our lives would be easy. He said His yoke would be easy upon us, that we would be able to serve Him in peace. We would be able to follow him in peace. And as long as we're in this world, we will have persecution; we will be troubled by the things of this world; but He's able to overcome anything that comes into our lives. We may not think so at certain times in our lives, but He's able to give us the victory.

Well, there's an application to be seen here in this book in Chapter 1 and verse 4, patience and faith through persecution and tribulation brings glory to God. Why are we persecuted? Why do we suffer tribulation? It's because we need to bring glory to Him, and God uses that to bring glory to Himself. And Jesus is not coming again until certain things take place according to 2nd Thessalonians chapter 2. And Paul says stand fast for God, 2nd Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 15: *Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.*

Have you trusted Him today as your Savior? If not, may I invite you to do so right now. "Lord Jesus, come into my heart. I turn from my sin. I turn to You and ask You to save me, Lord, for Christ's sake. I trust Christ today as my Savior." If you'll do that, He'll save you. Are you living for Him? Do you know Christ as your Savior? If you do, you need to be serving Him today.

Thank you for joining me once again for "It's a Good Life." And until the next time, may the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.