

UNIT 7 PART 2

BF232 OUR FUTURE HOPE

We continue our study of Our Future Hope. We saw in the last session that Paul told the Church in Thessaloniki they could not be in the Day of the Lord. This was because first of all, the rebellion had not happened. Secondly, the Man of Lawlessness had not been revealed. The Man of Lawlessness could not be revealed until it was God's time to allow him to come. Then, Paul talked about what will happen to the unsaved world when the Man of Lawlessness is revealed. He will deceive everyone who is not a believer. His deceit will be powerful. They will believe his lies and will face destruction with him.

THE CHURCH AND THE DAY OF THE LORD

Now, Paul gives a contrast. He says,

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 As for us, we can't help but thank God for you, dear brothers and sisters loved by the Lord. We are always thankful that God chose you to be among the first to experience salvation—a salvation that came through the Spirit who makes you holy and through your belief in the truth. He called you to salvation when we told you the Good News; now you can share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What this passage is saying is that

GOD HAS DIFFERENT PLANS FOR THE CHURCH

than He has for the unsaved world. This is very much like what we saw in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5. “*They* will say, ‘peace and safety.’ Sudden destruction comes upon *them*, and *they* will not escape. But *you*, brothers (contrast), are not in darkness that that day would overtake *you*. *You* are Children of the Light. God has not destined *us* for this Day of the Lord, but to obtain salvation through the Lord, Jesus Christ.”

In 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, God said that His plans for the Church are different than His plans for the unsaved world in the Tribulation. God's plan for the Church is to deliver us, or to give us, salvation. Paul seems to be saying the same thing here in 2 Thessalonians 2. He talks about what's going to happen to *them*. *They* are going to be deceived by the Man of Lawlessness because *they* did not receive the truth, so as to be saved. “But *you*,” he says, “God chose *you* for salvation.”

The salvation in the context of 2 Thessalonians 2 has to be understood in light of the judgment of 2 Thessalonians 2. The judgment is not talking about eternity in the Lake of Fire, though that would come after. It's talking about the judgment on earth called the Day of the Lord. The salvation in context is not eternity with the Lord, even though that follows.

He gets to that part at the end. The salvation in context, first of all, is being delivered from the Day of the Lord.

HIS FINAL PLAN FOR US IS TO SHARE IN THE GLORY OF CHRIST.

Therefore, God has chosen you for salvation. He's chosen to deliver you from the Day of the Lord. God has different plans for the Church. His plan for us is to share in the glory of the Lord, Jesus. He will deliver us from the Day of the Lord; and ultimately, we are to share in the glory of Jesus Christ.

THE CHURCH MUST STAND STRONG ON GOD'S WORD

In verses 15 through 17, Paul tells them what they should do now that they understand this truth.

2 Thessalonians 2:15 With all these things in mind, dear brothers and sisters, stand firm and keep a strong grip on the teaching we passed on to you both in person and by letter.

He reminds them of the things that he taught them when he was in their city. Then, he reminds them of the things that he taught them through 1 Thessalonians and now, through the letter of 2 Thessalonians. The reason he tells them to stand strong, or keep a strong grip, is because deceivers try to take away the truth from Christians. False teaching can cause Christians to lose their confidence. I love the way he says this. He says to keep a strong grip on this.

Sometimes, if you're holding something that you don't want to drop, you just squeeze it really hard. This is because you know, "If I drop this, I may lose it, or it may break." Paul is saying that believers need to hold onto what they've been taught, good Bible teaching that is clear from the Word of God.

FALSE TEACHING CAN CAUSE CHRISTIANS TO LOSE THEIR CONFIDENCE.

He says this because false teachers try to pull them away from the truth. We know that the believers in Thessaloniki had lost their confidence in God because of the false teachers who told them that the Day of the Lord had already begun.

Notice what Paul is doing. Paul says, "No, the Day of the Lord has not begun. It can't even happen yet; but you need to know that it's not going to happen to you anyway. God has different plans for you. Therefore, keep believing what we taught you from the beginning."

GOD IS ABLE TO COMFORT AND STRENGTHEN BELIEVERS.

2 Thessalonians 2:16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal comfort and a wonderful hope,

See that picture? He wants to remind them, “You have a different hope than the unsaved world.” Our future hope encourages us. He prays that God would:

2 Thessalonians 2:17 comfort you and strengthen you in every good thing you do and say.

He leaves them with confidence that God is able to strengthen and comfort believers.

SUMMARY OF PAUL'S MESSAGE

He says, “**You are not in the Day of the Lord.**” That's in the first part of the chapter. He says, “Don't let anyone deceive you. That day cannot come until the rebellion comes first and the One who holds back is taken out of the way.” Therefore, they are not in the Day of the Lord.

Also, **the fact that a false letter confused them shows that they originally did not expect to be in the Day of the Lord.** This is really important for you to see. The fact that a false letter showed up and confused them by saying they're in the Day of the Lord is proof that they did not expect to be in the Day of the Lord.

If someone tells me that my name is Scott, I'm not surprised by that because I know my name is Scott. If they thought they were going to be in the Day of the Lord, and the letter tells them they are in the Day of the Lord, they wouldn't be surprised. They would say, “Yeah, we know that.” This shows us that when Paul first taught them, he taught them that God would deliver them before the Day of the Lord came. He taught them that they would be caught up to meet the Lord in the air before the Day of the Lord came. That's why this false letter was confusing.

In 1 Thessalonians 5, Paul said that God would deliver them from the coming wrath. The wrath was not eternity in the Lake of Fire. It was a wrath that comes to the earth, the Day of the Lord, God's judgement on the world. He said that God would deliver them from that coming wrath.

God's plans for the Church were different than His plans for the world. Just like God delivered Noah from the flood, just like God rescued Lot before His wrath was poured out on Sodom, so God has purposed to deliver the Church before He pours out His wrath on the unsaved world. His plans are different for us than they are for them.

In 2 Thessalonians, Paul says first of all, that they are not in the Day of the Lord. Secondly, he reminds them of their relationship to the Day of the Lord. Maybe you remember this from our study of 1 Thessalonians 5. God's purpose for the Day of the Lord is to punish the nations. It's to bring Israel to repentance. God has no purpose for

the Church in the Day of the Lord because God has chosen to deliver us from that. That's our relationship to the Day of the Lord.

COMPARISON OF 1 THESSALONIANS 5 WITH 2 THESSALONIANS 2

I want you to see these comparisons. I'm going to show you several from 1 Thessalonians 5 and 2 Thessalonians 2. Paul says the same thing in each place.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:1-4, the unsaved world will think that everything is great, that all is well; but judgment will come upon them unsuspected. All of this is in the context of the Day of the Lord. See the same thing in 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 They will embrace the lies of Antichrist. They will be unsuspecting of any threat of judgment. All of this is in the context of the Day of the Lord.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:3, Paul says that the unsaved will not escape the judgment of God. In 2 Thessalonians 2:12, Paul says that the unsaved world will not escape this judgment of God. He says that all those who did not believe the truth will be judged. They will not escape.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:4, God's plan for believers is different from His plans for the unsaved world. That's marked by the contrast in verse 4. In 5:1-3, it's "them, them, they;" and then, he says "but you." There's a difference in 2 Thessalonians 2. God's plan for believers is different from His plan for the unsaved world. This is marked by the contrast in 2:13. Paul says "them, they," "they will be deceived," "they will be judged," "but we thank God for you." There's a contrast in 2 Thessalonians 2:13.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Paul says, "Therefore, encourage one another." At the end of this passage in 2 Thessalonians 2:16, Paul says, "May God comfort and strengthen your hearts."

The reason I'm showing you this is because Paul says the same thing in both passages. Follow me on this. Paul taught them in 1 Thessalonians 5 that they would not go through the Day of the Lord. In-between 1 and 2 Thessalonians, a false letter comes that says they're in the Day of the Lord. Now, what would you do if you taught someone this, and somebody else gives a false message here? You know what I would do? **I would teach them the same thing again. That's exactly what Paul does in 2 Thessalonians 2. It's the same message, line by line. He brings them back to the truth.**

GOD'S PLANS FOR THE CHURCH ARE DIFFERENT THAN HIS PLANS FOR THE UNSAVED WORLD.

Let's go back to our chart. In 1 Thessalonians 5, we saw that salvation was for us. God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation. That wrath, in context, is the Day of the Lord. That salvation, in context, is being delivered from the Day of the Lord. When we're caught up to meet the Lord in the air, the wrath in context is the judgment during the Day of the Lord.

When we come to 2 Thessalonians, we find the same thing. During this time period, the Man of Lawlessness will be revealed, the rebellion will come, and the Restrainer is removed. This probably starts at the midpoint of the seven years. Here's why I believe that's the time that it will happen. No one will know who Antichrist is until he fulfills the things written about him. When a world leader comes and signs a treaty for seven years, people who know the Scriptures are going to be thinking, "Wow, maybe that's the Antichrist; but I still don't know until he enters the Temple of God at the midpoint and claims to be God." When that happens, people can know that he is the Man of Lawlessness. That is the one that Paul said would come. When he comes, it's going to be wrath for them, for those who believe his lies.

Paul is giving the same message in 2 Thessalonians 2. He says, "God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation." The salvation, in context, is being rescued before the Day of the Lord comes. God's plan for unbelievers is that they will face this judgment during the Day of the Lord. God will allow them to be deceived by Antichrist because they rejected the true Christ. They chose pleasure of sin over the Gospel message.

PRINCIPLES AND APPLICATION

BELIEVERS SHOULD BE GROUNDED IN THE WORD OF GOD SO THEY WON'T BE DECEIVED BY FALSE TEACHERS.

We want you to know that we are teaching you the Word of God because it is so important for you to know the truth so that you will not be deceived by false teachers. As you study the word of God, you become strong. You can recognize false teaching because it does not fit with the true teaching. Believers need to be grounded in the Word of God because if they are not, they can be easily deceived by false teachers.

SATAN IS A DECEIVER. THOSE WHO BELIEVE HIS LIES WILL FACE DESTRUCTION.

Satan has many messages, but none of them are true. He wants to deceive people from the truth so that they will not be saved.

WHEN BELIEVERS ARE CONFUSED, WE ENCOURAGE THEM BY GIVING THEM THE TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD.

I love this in 2 Thessalonians because it's so simple. What do you do if you teach somebody something (1 Thessalonians 5), and they get confused or forget it (false letter comes?) Well, you just say the same thing again, (2 Thessalonians 2.) You may use different words, but it's the same truth. We keep coming back to the truth. You know what? When you're discipling believers, you're going to find that you teach them something, and they may forget that truth or become confused about it. God wants us to go back and teach them again, and again, and again because it's so important for us to walk in truth.

GOD PUTS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THOSE WHO ARE HIS AND THOSE WHO ARE NOT.

God has different plans for the unsaved world than He has for the Church.

WHEN BELIEVERS FORGET THESE TRUTHS, THEY NEED TO BE REMINDED.

I'll close with this, and I just want to encourage you with this. We always need to be coming back to the Word of God. After you read through the Bible one time, you may feel like, "Well, I've already read that. I don't need to read it again." The Word of God feeds us. The Word of God gives us strength. We need to come back to it over, and over, and over again. God continues to teach us as we spend time in His Word.