



Our Read-Ahead for: 23 April 2023

“Hope Comes from God’s Grace”

Monday: An Appointed Time (**Psalm 75**)

Tuesday: The Day Is Coming (**Malachi 4**)

Wednesday: No Good Thing Withheld (**Psalm 84**)

Thursday: My Help Comes from the Lord (**Psalm 121**)

Friday: The Hope of Eternal Life (**Titus 3:1-7**)

Saturday: Kept Sound and Blameless (**1st Thessalonians 5:23-28**)

Sunday: Eternal Comfort and Good Hope (**2nd Thessalonians 2:1-3, 9-17**)

30 April 2023

Hope Comes from God's Grace

Lesson Text: **2nd Thessalonians 2:1-3:9-17**

Bible Background: **2nd Thessalonians, chapter 2**

Devotional Reading: **Titus 3:1-7**

Keep in Mind: *For God chose to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us. (1st Thessalonians 5:9, NLT)*

Aim for Change

“By the end of the lesson, we will: **EXPLORE** the purpose for which God has called us; **TRUST** that God has a significant plan for our lives; and **PRAY** for a clear understanding of God's assignment.”

In Focus

In today's lesson, God is calling for commitment to His agenda: saving lost souls and helping to build His kingdom.

Focal Verses

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, 2:9-17~NKJV

1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,

2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,

10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,

12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

13 But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,

14 to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our [h]epistle.

16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace,

17 Comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

I. The Lesson

The People, Places and Times

Antichrist: Most Bible scholars identify the “man of sin” in today’s Scripture passage as identical to an antichrist written about by Paul (2 Thessalonians 2:3). In his epistles, John describes this antichrist as denying the Incarnation (1 John 4:3; 2 John 7) and denying the deity of Christ (1 John 2:2). The Incarnation is the theological term for the Son of God becoming a human being. Deity is the truth Jesus was and is truly God. becoming a human being. Deity is the truth Jesus was and is truly God. These two truths together show us Jesus was fully human and fully God. To deny these central truths is to be an antichrist. While there is a generic description of an antichrist, Scripture tells us that there will be a specific figure with great influence who will be the ultimate Antichrist.

In Revelation 13:1–8, the description of the beast is often equated with the Antichrist and the man of sin. Jesus mentioned false christs (Matthew 24:24; Mark 13:22). The Antichrist is prophesied to come right before the great tribulation. Some theologians interpret the antichrist symbolically, i.e., a spirit of unbelief.”

Background

Paul, Silas, and Timothy founded the church at Thessalonica on Paul’s second missionary journey (Acts 17:1–10), but the apostle Paul had to leave in a rush due to the degree of persecution there. In Paul’s first letter to the church, he not only comforted these struggling believers but also offered encouragement because they were still experiencing threats and various types of harassment because of their faith. However, false teachings were causing

problems for this infant church; incorrect information concerning Jesus' return, spread and caused some believers to quit their jobs and become idle. Idleness bred the sinful conduct of minding other people's business. Therefore, Paul wrote this second letter to encourage the Thessalonians in their suffering of persecution, and to correct the false information. Also, he instructed them to get back to work and reminded them of conduct becoming children of a Holy God set apart from sin.

II. In Depth

1. **Those Not Left Behind (2nd Thessalonians 2:1–3)** Obviously, someone forged a letter from Paul. The letter said, the day of the Lord had already come. Many writers, so-called spiritual leaders, and even a few contemporary preachers gave people information contrary to what the Bible teaches concerning the second coming of our Lord. Some have even claimed to be the Messiah.

Then Paul rushed to comfort the Thessalonian Christians; Jesus has not yet returned. The Bible gives us many warning signs. Among them is the coming of the man of sin or of lawlessness, also called an antichrist, whom we can read about in Revelation 13. At this time, there will be open rebellion against God. So no, Jesus has not yet returned. And we do not need to worry about being left behind if we have accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior.”

2. **Those Fooled by the Man of Sin (2nd Thessalonians 2: 9–12)** This Antichrist is not Satan, but Satan is the power behind him. Satan will be helping him perform all sorts of noticeable miracles and evil deeds. People who did not believe in our wonder-working God will somehow believe in the “magic tricks” of the Antichrist. Human beings have a spiritual vacuum inside which can only be filled with Jesus. But those who refuse Him try to fill that vacuum with all sorts of alternatives: drugs, illicit sex, false-religions, and even perfectly good deeds; but deeds without Jesus will leave people just as empty. Because these people have deliberately rejected the truth. God will allow them to be fooled by the greatest deception of all: that the Antichrist is God.
3. **Loved, Chosen, and Called (2nd Thessalonians 2:13–14)** Paul affirmed to the struggling Thessalonians they were loved by Almighty God, Himself. In fact, this great salvation they received had nothing to do with their own merit, but was because of God's favor. They, as we, could not earn it, but had to accept it as a gift from God. Paul reminded them, God chose them to be a part of His family, and through His Holy Spirit, God made them and all believers like Christ (Romans 8:29). Our salvation is not because we have been so good or so kind. It is because a loving God had compassion and mercy on us and chose us to be His heirs. Therefore, we can never boast in our salvation because we have to receive the forgiveness of sin through belief on the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and

Savior (John 3:16). No one took Jesus' life, but as Jesus said, "I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:18).

In 2nd Thessalonians 2:14, Paul repeated God worked through Silas, Timothy, and himself to bring the Good News of salvation to the Thessalonians. Still, their salvation was all about God and His work and not about Paul and his companions, who apart from God's work are like us: "fallible, unfaithful, untrustworthy human creatures" (Life Application Study Bible, 1923). Yet, God can and does take fallible, unfaithful, untrustworthy human beings and uses them for His glory."

4. **Standing Firm in the Faith (2nd Thessalonians 2: 15–17)** Paul built up the Thessalonians by encouraging them in the faith, he moved on to encourage them to stand firm. He wanted them to commit to faithfulness to God. The apostle knew that one threat to the church was false teaching or doctrine. For the Thessalonians, believing the Second Coming was imminent caused "them to fall into the sins of idleness and being busybodies. Such confusion was a negative witness for a lost and dying world. It did not represent God well. Paul urged them to commit and hold on to the foundational truths were taught from the beginning of their faith and to get back to work.

In verses 16 and 17, Paul ended this part of his letter by reminding the Thessalonians that it was God who loved them and done so with His special favor (grace); this same God gave them "everlasting consolation" and hope through salvation. According to John 10:28, Jesus said, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." This means Jesus protects believers from harm forever. All believers can expect to suffer on earth. Yet we have the assurance from God Himself Satan cannot harm our souls or take away our eternal life Jesus paid the price for in full when He died on the Cross. Paul then prayed this same God would both comfort the Thessalonians' hearts in the midst of their struggles as well as give them strength in everything they did and said.

III. Take Aways

IV. Closing Prayer