



Bible Prophecy Update: Jun 07, 2020

Don't Be Easily Alarmed

Pastor JD Farag

All right. Good morning and welcome to our second service. We're in 2 Thessalonians and our text today will be verses 1 and 2. We're not going to quite get to verse 3. But I'll have you turn there if you're not there already. And once you do if you're able I'll ask you to stand; You can follow along as I read.

The Apostle Paul is writing to this church in Thessalonica. We are beginning a very interesting and I would say prophetic chapter. A chapter fitly spoken if I can say it that way, today. So, beginning in verse one the Apostle Paul writing to the church says, "Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and [key word] our being gathered to him. We ask you, brothers and sisters, not to become [verse 2] easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us, whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter asserting that the Day of the Lord has already come."

Let's pray if you would join with me. Lord thank you for these two verses that we have before us today. Would you settle our hearts, quiet our minds, so that we can give you our undivided attention? And Lord as we do, would you speak clearly into our lives in and through your Word we pray. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. You can be seated. Thank you.

I want to talk with you today about how we as Christians should never be easily alarmed, or become unsettled especially in light of all that is happening in our world, in our country today. It's interesting when this crisis first hit, I went to the Lord, sought the Lord, inquired of the Lord, concerning what I was to do in terms of the teaching of his Word.

I really sensed that the Lord would have me to begin doing these topical teachings on Thursday nights instead of resuming the book of Proverbs at least at that time. Then also on Sunday mornings to begin addressing really all that was happening from a prophetic perspective, because what was happening was very prophetic. For obvious reasons, I think you would agree.

But in the back of my mind, I kept in mind this chapter that we have before us today. I mentioned this on Thursday night and I love this about God's word because no matter where you're at in God's Word that's where you're at. Because of God's Word... Did that come out right? I hope so. Listen that's the best I got so...

But it doesn't matter where you're at in your life or what's happening in your life, you get into the Word and it will speak to exactly what is happening in your life and the reason is because God's Word is alive and it's sharper than any two-edged sword. It's able to surgically cut between soul and spirit, bone and marrow. Imagine it as a surgical instrument.

The Word of God, it cuts and removes from us that which should never take up residence in our lives, and certainly, that is the case today as we begin this chapter. Let me say it this way if you were to take and put a caption under the picture of what is happening particularly, easy for me to say, in America today. You could put under that picture: 2 Thessalonians chapter 2.

As I'm sure doubtless you've seen even now with what is happening. They're calling for the defunding of the police. I cannot tell you how many times and maybe the same is true for you as well that I heard this one particular word all week. It's the word that we're going to see as we get into this chapter in our study of this chapter in 2 Thessalonians 2, and that word is, lawlessness. Lawlessness.

In other words, what we are seeing happening today is an apt description of what we see here in God's word today in this chapter. It's very interesting that these Thessalonians Christians had thought



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that the 7-year tribulation had already started. That the Day of the Lord had already come which is actually why Paul is writing this 2nd letter to them. This is why he pens this 2nd letter and even more interesting is that there's almost this built-in divine outline in this 2nd epistle.

There are 3 chapters in 2 Thessalonians. In Chapter 1, Paul encourages them in the midst of severe persecution and affliction at the hands of those that were causing trouble and causing them problems. He even says to them, those who trouble you? Don't worry. God's going to take care of them, those that cause you these problems. There were those trouble makers.

In Chapter 2, Paul assures them that they were not in the 7-year tribulation, and they did not miss the rapture. Then in Chapter 3 as we're going to see, Lord willing, he goes from encouraging them and assuring them, to warning them. He warns them concerning their idleness and just waiting around for the rapture to happen. In fact, some of them had actually quit their jobs and were being a financial burden on those who... were still working. and Paul...

Isn't that just like us? That's one of the dangers I guess you could say when it comes to the rapture and Bible prophecy, is this notion that, hey, why bother the Lord's coming back? Wait a minute. We are admonished to occupy until he comes, to be found faithful doing that which he has called us to do, to be busy about the things of the Lord. And if there was ever a time that time is now.

Well, be that as it may we have a very important text before us in these two verses, and it must be understood in order to settle this matter once and for all. And I'll explain what I mean when I say that. If this remains unsettled, then we shouldn't be surprised when we become easily alarmed or fearful. When there's this thought that looks what's happening? We must be in the tribulation. Maybe the rapture doesn't happen before the tribulation? Look what's happening!

If you only knew how many comments and emails and posts we get from people saying, "The 6th seal just got opened!" No, it didn't. We're already in the tribulation! No, we are not. I'm getting so much... well, I don't want to take credit for it. God has dealt with me over the years but I've always been so tempted to just... It would just take a few strokes of the keyboard, and in a sanctified way, of course, respond with something to the effect of, you ain't seen nothing yet.

This is nothing compared to what's going to happen. This is a foreshadow of what's to come. The tribulation period is casting its shadow now. We're just getting a sort of a preview of coming attractions if I can say it that way.

The reason that it's so important to settle this is because if you are wishy-washy, ambiguous, uncertain, unclear? Then no wonder you're going to be full of fear because look what's happening. It's when you understand that the rapture has to happen before the 7-year tribulation, that it just settles it and it settles you.

Interesting, these Thessalonian Christians were of the belief, because apparently there was this letter that was making its way around. It would be the equivalent today of somebody posting a YouTube video, "We're in the tribulation." These Christians started doubting everything Paul had taught them when he was there with them, and then in his first letter to them and then now he writes to clarify and set the record straight. That's what this chapter is about. He's saying to them, don't be fearful. Don't become easily unsettled; Don't be alarmed. He's setting the record straight.



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What follows are 2 reasons from these two verses that will be germane to our understanding especially, Lord willing, next week when we take and tackle verse 3. Why is verse 3 so important? Because I am of the belief and I want to talk about this, Lord willing, next week that in verse 3 of 2 Thessalonians Paul is saying that the tribulation can't start until the rapture happens first. Then the Antichrist is revealed.

As you might imagine this has been the subject of much debate amongst very well-respected Bible teachers. I've confessed very openly that I've gone back and forth concerning verse 3. But the importance that the importance of these two verses because Paul is talking about the day of the Lord, the 7-year tribulation, and he's sort of clarifying and setting the record straight and addressing their concerns about having missed the rapture.

This is why he says what he says with specificity, and he delineates between the rapture and the second coming. And that's the first reason that we should never become unsettled. These are two separate events. Notice in verse 1, Paul says that and he uses this word, keyword, "and". Don't be unsettled.; You need to settle this. "Concerning the Lord's coming and our being gathered up to him."

That's the rapture. These are two distinct events. Critics, of which there are many of the pre-tribulation rapture doctrines, sound doctrine, and truth, will often say well, "If the rapture is true, then that means that the 2nd coming is not really the 2nd coming, it's the 3rd coming."

Now I have to admit that there was a time, many years ago, when I was like, mmm, that's a good point, I never thought of that. Then I started going back and forth and then I realized, wait, wait, wait, no. At the rapture, he doesn't come, we go. Can I say that again? Indulge me because I just want to anyway.

He doesn't come to the earth! We are caught up to him! It's not a coming of the Lord! It's a gathering up of his church to the Lord! Paul is very clear in no uncertain terms that these are two separate events, and when you start dancing around and twisting this into a prophecy pretzel. I don't know where that came from but that's pretty good actually. You start mixing them up and twisting them up. No wonder you're so unsettled.

The Christian that I feel the most sorry for, especially with everything that's happening in the world today, is the Christian that hasn't settled this. The rapture of the church has to happen before the 7-year tribulation. It's almost like Paul is saying, hey, let's start over.

Keep in mind, he loves them so much. Never imagine the Apostle Paul losing his patience with them. He longed to be with them. He couldn't go back after he was run out of town. Some believe again that he was only there for maybe a month. We're told in the book of Acts that he was there for at least three weeks, but he wasn't there very long before they ran him out of town.

Then after he left, he writes this letter. His first letter, the first epistle that the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write was to this church, and so about a year has gone by and during that time... It's kind of like what Paul said in Acts 20 that he would weep day and night for the church because he knew that after he left there would come wolves in sheep's clothing. They wouldn't spare the flock and it seems that's what was happening here.



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There were these false teachers that were spreading false teachings concerning the rapture, and it confused them, and it unsettled them. And it alarmed them because the implications of that were such that if the rapture isn't before the 7-year tribulation, then we better hunker down. We better get ready.

By the way, don't you think it's interesting that nowhere in Scripture are we, as the church, ever admonished to prep for the tribulation period? Conversely, we are admonished to be ready and watching for his appearing. Even when Paul writes to Timothy, he was at the end of his life, and he says, I finished the race. What awaits me now, the crown of righteousness. I finished well, and I'm going. I have this crown of righteousness that awaits me. and not just me, those who long for his appearing, not coming.

Appearing, that's the rapture, those who long for the rapture. This is why I never come down hard on people who are just so I mean they get dangerously close to starting to say, Well, it's going to be at this time, and we don't know the day or the hour. I mean their heart's right. It's just they're doing the right thing in the wrong way. But there's nothing wrong with longing for his return. Even aching for his return in the rapture.

Paul is now going to get into this second reason, and please don't miss this. Because, again, it's going to be so key to our understanding of the entire context of the entire chapter. If we don't understand what he's saying here, in verses 1 and 2, then verse 3 isn't going to make any sense. What he's saying is that the Day of the Lord, that day? That's the 7-year tribulation.

What he's telling them to clear it up and set the record straight is: That day, speaking of the 7-year tribulation, the Day of the Lord, when God's wrath is poured out on a Christ-rejecting world, that day can't come until [not the falling away, the apostasy] the departure, the rapture comes first, that day.

Because, again, why would he say that, that way? Because they were convinced and believed and were deceived that they had missed the rapture. Could you imagine that? That they were already in the tribulation. By the way, isn't it interesting that they would draw that conclusion wrongly but that they would still draw that conclusion? Okay, so if we're in the tribulation, that means we missed the rapture. Which tells me they knew that the rapture had to happen before the tribulation, because if they were already in the tribulation, and the rapture had to happen before the tribulation? They missed the rapture. Please, tell me that made sense.

Because, in other words, they knew. Wait, wait! We're in the tribulation? The rapture has to happen first that means we missed the rapture if we are in the tribulation. Which means they knew that the rapture had to happen before the 7-year tribulation. Pastor, why are you harping on this? Because... Well, I'm getting ahead of myself.

I've had to settle this, myself. I'll talk more about that in a moment, stay with me. There's nothing new under the sun. Jesus said that the enemy comes to steal, kill, and destroy in that order. Interesting. But Jesus says, I have come that you might have life and life more abundantly.

What's he saying? He's saying that we have an enemy, Satan. What is his sole goal? His sole goal is to steal from us that which is ours. Oh, what's he going to steal? He's not going to steal your car. What's he going to do with your car? He doesn't need a car. He's not going to steal your credit card. He's not going to steal your ID. I mean what's he going to do with that?



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So, what is it pray tell that Satan wants to steal? Oh, he wants to steal your hope. Namely the blessed hope that we have. Because if he can succeed in stealing our hope, then confusion and fear will always ensue.

So, how's he going to do that? Well he's the author of confusion, isn't he? He's the father of lies and the accuser of the brethren. I mean we're basically already told what his strategies are. I think about the Apostle Paul writing to the Corinthians, and he tells them, don't be ignorant about the wiles of the Devi, the devices of Satan.

To the Ephesians, he says that Satan is like this lion. He stalks his prey and he's looking for an optimum time to attack. He is very patient by the way, and he studies us. In the original language, it carries with it the idea of like a military strategist. You know those old World War 2 photos where you have the military. They're studying the map and they're strategizing.

That's what the enemy does with the map of your Christian life. He's studying you and he is stalking you. He's looking for that opportunity, that optimum time and point. He knows and studies the weakness, the weak areas. So, he knows if you're wishy-washy in some area that's where he's going to attack. That's where he's going to sow the seeds of confusion and plant a spirit of fear.

One of the most successful strategies of Satan, if I can say it that way, is to sow seeds of doubt. Again, I have to confess that I'm not exempt. I have to say that as I've seen all of this unfold, I've had to step back... Okay, I'd better make sure that I'm sound in this and settled in this, I can't be wishy-washy.

I made that comment and we had an online member say, I'm not wishy-washy, I'm watchy-watchy. I kind of like that. That's a good T-shirt right there, I think. Lest one come down too hard on someone or even yourself, think about John the Baptist. No greater than John the Baptist, Jesus said.

But there he sits in prison and that's where he will remain until they kill him and sitting there, he begins to doubt. So much so that he sends a message to Jesus just to make sure, and the question is basically... Here's the doubt, are you... this is John the Baptist, are you kidding me? Even he could start doubting and fearing? Are you the Savior or is there another coming after you?

I think it was Oswald Chambers that said it if I'm not mistaken, God never faults a man for despair. I would add that God never faults a man for doubt. He understands we are but dust. He knows, he is so gentle, patient, kind, long-suffering.

There are going to be those times of doubt and there are certain things that can shake you and you can have what is affectionately referred to as a crisis of faith. It's at that time that you'd better get into the Word and the Word into you and settle it. Because the longer it takes, the more opportunity you give to the enemy to wreak havoc in your Christian life.

For example, and this is confession time. So, I got an email, actually two emails from local members. You know that it's a Turkish proverb that says when one man calls you a donkey pay no attention. When two men call you a donkey, get a saddle. You should see how many saddles I have. But the point is as Scripture says, let everything be established in the presence of two or more witnesses. Anyway, so when I got it the second time, I thought maybe I need to talk about this.

Here's an email locally about signing up for the Hawaii Contact Tracing Program. Now if you've been attending for any length of a period of time or following especially the updates as of late you know about this. It's called: Trace, Test, Reach and Contact Everyone, T-R-A-C-E, contact tracing. So, we're



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going to test everyone. Oh, you are? Yeah. You're going to come knocking on my door? Yeah. Do you have people to do that? We're recruiting right now. ... and I guess it pays well.

Okay, why am I sharing this? Because again I have to confess when I first saw this? I thought, oh no! It's happening. Lord, come now before they knock on my door. The Lord's like, what are you doing? I don't know. Are you doubting? Yes. Are you fearful? I don't know. Maybe. I don't want to be tested.

By the way, when they say that there's X number of new cases tested positive for COVID-19, really? Okay. What does that mean? So, you tested positive. By the way, there's something called, false positive. In fact, there are many reports about the tests themselves being flawed.

Let's just say for purpose of discussion, that you test positive. You feel fine and you look good too. You look marvelous. But apparently, you have COVID-19. You're asymptomatic. Okay, what does that mean? That means we're going to trace you and track you for the rest of your life. That's what it means.

Pastor, come on, don't you think you're kind of getting a little carried away here? No. It's exactly what this means. Well isn't the Lord going to come back before? Well, that's what I'm confessing. The enemy was right there putting thoughts of fear in my mind about when they come knocking on my door and then the Lord reminded me that even if they do prior to the rapture? I have nothing to fear because it means a sooner rapture.

Let me say the same thing again: I've settled this. The rapture has to happen before the 7-year tribulation. That's a game-changer. I can get tested. I might even test positive. But I will not be here when the mark of the beast is forced on everyone, Revelation 13, great and small, poor and rich. I will not be here and knowing that and having that settled, I mean when I say game-changer, that's an understatement.

Because it just settles the matter. Test me all you want. Track me all you want. Do whatever you want but it's not going to be very much longer. In fact, it's going to be actually, because of this, sooner. That just means it sooner. Why am I so sure? Because I've settled this. Am I going to be like the Thessalonians Christians? Oh! We're in the tribulation! This is the tribulation! We missed the rapture! Maybe the rapture doesn't happen before the 7-year tribulation? No!

Do not be easily unsettled or alarmed. Let me take it a step further. Don't let the enemy get away with that. Don't let him steal your hope. He wants to do that. Because if he can get away with that, man he's got you right where he wants you.

Then let's just even take it further. Just give me a moment and stay with me on this. So, what happens now? Let's just say that as a Christian, I am given over to now the doubt, the confusion, the fear. He's stolen my hope and my joy and my peace with it. What kind of an advertisement am I for Jesus Christ now?

How about that unbelieving friend, co-worker, neighbor, family member looking at me going, Dude! Well, or dudette, whatever... What's the matter? I mean you're just as afraid as they are, if not more so. How are you going to be light? How are you going to give to everyone the answer of that hope that lies within you?

The world right now is, I mean, begging for answers. They want to see a Christian who is settled in a world that is unsettled. I'm losing my voice so I'll stop yelling. I'll close with Titus 2, oh, my goodness. Can you turn there, please?



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I just want to read verses 11 through 15. I can't even begin to tell you how much I needed to revisit this particular passage here in God's Word and I hope that you'll be as encouraged and reignited as I was by this.

Verse 11, "For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people." Okay, verse 12, "It teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled upright and godly lives in this present age." Hang onto verse 13, we'll get there in a second.

Paul and John both echoed this. John says it this way, the one who has this hope of his soon appearing purifies himself, gets his affairs in order. Paul writing to the Romans Chapter 13 says, "Our salvation draws nearer. The grace of God has appeared that offers salvation."

Paul says it is nearer now than it ever has been. It's time to wake up. Wake up from your spiritual slumber and put off the deeds of darkness, and put on righteousness, the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

How many years ago now, nine years, my goodness. In 2011, I did a 7 weeks series on why the rapture has to happen before the 7-year tribulation, and this was one of the reasons. Because the one who has this hope purifies himself. It has a profound impact on how we live our lives in this world.

In other words, if I live my life knowing that Jesus could come at any time? I mean that changes everything right? I mean I'd better get my affairs in order because it could happen at any time. I always have to be ready. Oil in my lamp. I always have to be watching because I don't want, as we read in Revelation when he does come... I forget which church it is, of the seven churches...

But if you don't wake up when I do come, it will be for you as a thief in the night. Here was this church that was asleep. He says, wake up and look up because your redemption draws nigh. Jesus is coming! And that should have such a powerful and profound impact on how we live our lives.

I think about that parable in Matthew 24, we'll get to verse 13, hang on. You have to be patient, you're in church.

Matthew 24, the end of the chapter, Jesus teaches this parable in contrast to these 2 servants: One is wicked; One is righteous. The common denominator is the master says, hey I'm leaving but I'm coming back. So, when I come back you need to be found faithful doing that which I've called you to do.

The difference between the two servants was one of them thought, hey he could come back at any time, and he was busy about the things of God and his master. So, when his master did come, he was not caught off guard, it was not as a thief in the night. When his master did come, he found him faithful doing that which he was called to do, and he said, well done good and faithful servant. The words that we all long to hear, "Enter in, well done."

What about the other servant? Oh, that's a whole different story. By contrast, that servant said to himself, this was his mindset. He's not coming back right now. This was his mindset. Everybody thought that it was going to be in their lifetime. No, he delays his coming. He's not coming back. I got plenty of time and what do we read about that servant who does not live with that expectation that his master could return at any time?



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Party on. He eats with gluttons, drinks with drunkards beats his fellow servants, and he parties like there's no tomorrow. No worry, no hurry. Then when the master returns, it's at an hour he expected not, and he is cast into outer darkness. It's quite chilling I have to say. That was the contrast between the two: One who expected his master to return was the one whose life was evidence of it.

Do you know the Christian that is on fire for the Lord, living their life for the Lord right now in these times, and doing well, boding well, faring well? Is the Christian that knows that the Lord's return is at the door.

Now verse 13... [Titus 2:13] He says we're going to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age while we wait. I don't like that word [wait] for the blessed hope. What is the blessed hope? Glad you asked cause he's going to answer right now. "The appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ."

The appearing, not the coming! "Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness..." [Titus 2:14] Can I add lawlessness, please? I just did. "... and to purify [there it is] for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. These then are the things you should teach, encourage, and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you." [Titus 2:15] That's another topic for another time.

It's like Paul saying in 1 Thessalonians 4 after he says that the rapture is going to happen, when the trumpet sounds and the dead and Christ rise first, and we who are alive and remain will be caught up..." Raptured up, harpazo in the Greek, rapturos in the Latin. And then we're going to meet the Lord in the air.

Then when he gets done talking about the rapture, he says, therefore... Whenever you read the word, therefore, it's there for a reason. I know that's deep. "Therefore, encourage one another with these words."

Settle this matter and you'll be encouraged. If it's not settled? You're going to be unsettled, and you're going to be alarmed, and you're going to be discouraged, and that discouragement will give way to despair. It is so important. I don't know that there's ever been a time in our lifetime where this has been as important as it is today. Why don't you stand and we'll pray?

Father in heaven, thank you. Thank you for the blessed hope of your soon appearing. Lord, thank you for the impact, the effect, that it has on our lives. Lord, thank you for the expectancy, the longing, the waiting, the watching for your return, and knowing that it's soon and very soon and that you are going to deliver us and take us out of this world. This world that is passing away and dying. Lord, we're witnessing right before our very eyes, the death of this nation and we grieve, not as those without hope, but we still grieve nonetheless.

But Lord that's a good thing because it takes our eyes off this world, our love for this world, the things in this world, and refocuses our attention upon you. Lord, thank you for loosening our grip even to the point where we just let go of this world.

I think of that hymn, "The world behind me, the cross before me. Though none go with me, still I will follow." Jesus, come quickly and be an encouragement Lord to those, encourage their hearts, that are struggling maybe even doubting as they see what's happening.



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Please, Lord, I pray if anything that I've been able to do by the Holy Spirit today... instead of looking at you through the lens of what's happening in this world, we look at what's happening in this world through your lens, Lord, and that makes it right. And that settles it and it puts it into perspective, a much-needed perspective. Thank you, Lord, for that.

In Jesus name. Amen.