

# **The Now and the Not Yet**

Lesson 1

2 Thessalonians 1

August 9, 2020

## **The Coming Justice of God**

### **Introduction**

Every day we are bombarded with spam mail that promises, “if you do such and such, you will win this grand prize!” All you have to do is give them your social security number, the names of your closest friends, and your first-born child!

God’s “blessings” or what we see as blessings have become much the same. They’re material rewards for doing well. We think we are promised everything we want if we merely follow the right approach. We tend to believe that being a Christian means a pain-free, comfortable life. This perspective leads to a distorted view of blessing. We see it as, “Jesus will make my life comfortable, and give me enjoyable things if I simply do good things for Him.”

God’s will is to bring glory to Himself and to accomplish good for those who love Him. God did not promise a life of ease. Jesus himself expected to suffer. This was a hard thing to learn for the Jews who were looking for the physical blessings they thought they were entitled to if they lived a “good” life. Jesus turned these expectations upside down, saying blessed is the person who mourns, the person who suffers, the person who is persecuted because of righteousness. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. He promised spiritual blessings, not merely presents for good behavior.

***Memory verse: “With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire***

***for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith.” —2  
Thessalonians 1:11***

Pray then read 2 Thessalonians 1. What questions or observations do you have about these passages?

**What do the passages say?**

1. Who wrote 2 Thessalonians, and to whom was it written? (2 Thessalonians 1:1)
2. Through what has the Thessalonian church continued in perseverance and faith? (2 Thessalonians 1:4)
3. What will God give to those who are troubled? (2 Thessalonians 1:6)
4. What will God do to those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel? (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9)
5. What is it that Paul, Silas, and Timothy are praying for regarding the church? (2 Thessalonians 1:11)
6. What is the reason for their prayers? (2 Thessalonians 1:12)

## What do the passages mean?

1. What are the fruits (positive outcomes) of the Thessalonians' perseverance and faith through their many trials? (2 Thessalonians 1:3; 1:5; 1:10). Are the Thessalonians entitled to these blessings of spiritual fruit and the promise of salvation? (Were they earned?) (Romans 3:10-12; Ephesians 2:8-9)
2. Jesus suffered, though He had done nothing to deserve it. Prophets were scoffed at and killed for their messages. What is expected from a life that follows Jesus? (Matthew 10:22; John 16:33)
3. It is easy to look at the lives of those around us who live in debauchery and wonder if theirs is the blessed life. What is the punishment for those who put their trust in the world? (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9) Whose job is it to bring justice to those who have mistreated you? (2 Thessalonians 1:6-7)
4. Why is it that we must look past the physical entanglements and trappings of the world? (2

Corinthians 4:18; Hebrews 11:24-27) What is our true blessing during our trials and persecutions? (Psalm 73:28)

5. With Jesus, the full and final blessing is given to those who believe. What are the temporary blessings the Jews expected from God? (Deuteronomy 28-30) How were these expectations subverted through what Jesus said? (Luke 6:20-28)

### **Applying the passages**

1. Is your faith growing more and more? Is the love you have for others increasing? Are you persevering in faith throughout all the trials you are enduring? Take a look at your daily choices and actions. What are you putting more value upon than the work and person of Christ, and what needs to change to make Jesus the priority?

