

## II Thessalonians 1:1–12

**II Thessalonians 1:1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:**

**P**AUL, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians. Paul's spiritual humility is seen in that though he was the primary author of the epistle, he did not feel the need to single himself out from these other servants of Christ. This teaches us that all ministry is a collective effort of the entire Christian church. And though members may differ as to where Christ has placed them,<sup>1</sup> this in no way infers that not all are needed for ministerial outreach.<sup>2</sup>

(Pulpit Commentary, II Thess. 1:1) *Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus.* This Epistle, like the former, is written in their conjoint names, as all three were engaged in the planting of the Church in Thessalonica. *Unto the Church of*

*the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*In God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

(Meyer's NT Commentary, II Thess. 1:1) according to the Pauline custom, the fulness of Christian blessings is derived *in common* from God *and Christ*. The absolute *πατρός* (comp. Galatians 1:3; 1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4)<sup>3</sup> is equivalent to *πατρός ἡμῶν*, more frequently used elsewhere in similar places; comp. Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 1:2; Php 1:2; Colossians 1:2; Philemon 1:3.<sup>4</sup>

The apostle recognized whom the Thessalonians were in—*God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*. He knew the Thessalonians through previous contact as abiding in both the Father and the Son.<sup>5</sup> He also knew that their profession of faith was sincere as they had demonstrated in

1 I Cor. 12:18 *But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.*

2 I Cor. 12:22 *Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:*

3 Gal. 1:3 *Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,*

I Tim. 1:2 *Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.*

II Tim. 1:2 *To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Tit. 1:4 *To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.*

4 Rom. 1:7 *To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

I Cor. 1:3 *Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

II Cor. 1:2 *Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Eph. 1:2 *Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Phil. 1:2 *Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Col. 1:2 *To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Phlm. 1:3 *Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

5 I Thess. 1:1 *Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

## The Dead Shall Rise

their lives the spiritual fruits of faith, love, and hope, which were all collective proof of their being born of God and abiding in His will. They were a true church of Jesus Christ, founded by Him, and the apostle recognized them as such.

### ***II Thessalonians 1:2 Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.***

This second epistle to the Thessalonians begins much like his first one, reminding these early believers of the *grace* and *peace* sent to them by *God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*. God calls sinners to Himself through the redemptive work of Christ<sup>6</sup> so that His grace and peace may be given to them, replacing also promised wrath and judgment.

*Grace* is that disposition of God that desires good for the sinner and not evil. *Strong's Concordance* defines #5485 *charis* as "grace, kindness." *HELPS Word-studies* reveals the word as "preeminently used of the Lord's favor—freely extended to give Himself away to people (because He is 'always leaning toward them')." Because of God's grace—His kind disposition toward man—when men transgress against Him, they can be forgiven if they sincerely repent of their sins and seek divine forgiveness.<sup>7</sup> This teaches us that it is God's wish that no man should die in his sin or that fallen nature passed on

through Adam. Ultimately, divine grace is meant to prevent this if there is genuine repentance for sin.

The Greek word for *peace* is #1515 *eiréné*, meaning "peace, quietness, rest."<sup>8</sup> *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word as "(from *eirō*, 'to join, tie together into a whole')—properly, wholeness, i.e. when all essential parts are joined together; peace (God's gift of wholeness)." *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* defines *eiréné* as "a state of national tranquility; exemption from the rage and havoc of war." It is also defined as "peace between individuals, i.e. harmony, concord." For those who believe that God raised Jesus from the dead and subsequently make Jesus Christ Lord of their lives, there is produced a state of harmony, tranquility, and peace with God.<sup>9</sup> It was for this purpose that Jesus died.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, when repentant sinners surrender their lives to the Son of God and His lordship over their lives, an armistice with God begins and peace with Him ensues. It is also by believing in and submitting to the lordship of God that men display their willingness to come under His divine government and rule. Because of this submission to divine authority, revealed by their reception of Christ's lordship over their lives, peace is established between them and God.

### ***II Thessalonians 1:3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as***

<sup>6</sup> Eph. 1:7 *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*

<sup>7</sup> II Chrn. 7:14 *If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*

Acts 2:38 *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

Acts 3:19 *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.*

<sup>8</sup> *Strong's Concordance*

<sup>9</sup> Rom. 5:1 *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

<sup>10</sup> Col. 1:19–20 *For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; <sup>20</sup>And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.*

*it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;*

In Paul's first letter he references the *work of faith* and *labor of love* evidenced by the church of Thessalonica.<sup>11</sup> In his second epistle he writes how the Thessalonians' *faith* had grown and their *charity* toward each other now abounded. This teaches us that it is both faith and love growing and developing in the Christian that prove spiritual advancement. Hence, there is no such thing as true spiritual development without the increase of these two divine fruits of the Spirit. Whereas knowledge, even if it is biblical, is not an accurate measure of either salvation or spiritual growth, manifesting sincere faith and love surely is. But if any have not received the Holy Spirit,<sup>12</sup> it will prove impossible for them either to possess or to manifest the divine and spiritual fruits of *faith* and *love*. Understandably, those whom God makes His children will manifest the same nature of their Father, and this is most visibly seen by their possessing *faith* and *love*, which are both divinely linked to Him.

**II Thessalonians 1:4** *So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:*

The Greek word for *patience* is #5281 *hupomoné*. *Strong's Concordance* defines it as "a remaining behind, a patient enduring." Its usage is "endurance, steadfastness, patient waiting for." HELPS

*Word-studies* states, "5281 *hupomoné* (from 5259 /*hypó*, 'under' and 3306 /*ménō*, 'remain, endure')—properly, remaining under, endurance; steadfastness, especially as God enables the believer to 'remain (endure) under' the challenges He allots in life." These definitions reveal that spiritual patience is needed to endure certain things in this life until the time comes for God's deliverance. Every trial has an end, and through sufficient faith and trust in the Lord, all trials for the Christian can be both endured and overcome. He who endures to the end shall be saved,<sup>13</sup> and he who trusts God fully with his life will not be disappointed. The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation<sup>14</sup> even as continued faith in God is a strong catalyst for enduring worldly persecution.

*Faith* is the Greek word #4102 *pistis*. *Strong's Concordance* defines the word as "faith, belief, trust, confidence; fidelity, faithfulness." The gift of faith strengthens believers not to lose confidence in the Lord, regardless of the tribulations they are experiencing. No doubt, life is hard even without religious persecution, yet a firm and unyielding trust in the Lord makes trials bearable, trials that without faith would prove unbearable. Ultimately, at the base of any true walk with the Lord is a sincere and genuine trust in Him.<sup>15</sup> Practically, faith can do so much more for the human heart to encourage it than a room full of biblical knowledge ever could. It is also by knowing and having faith in the spiritual reality that God

11 I Thess. 1:3–4 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; <sup>4</sup>Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

12 Rom. 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

13 Matt. 24:13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

14 II Pet. 2:9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

15 Ps. 9:10 And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

## The Dead Shall Rise

is in control of all things<sup>16</sup> that enables the believer to be assured that the Lord has not left him and will in sufficient time deliver him.

***II Thessalonians 1:5 Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:***

The servant is not above his Master;<sup>17</sup> therefore, elements of what Jesus endured by His being despised and rejected of men must also be experienced by those who have come to believe upon Him. It is also the persecution of the righteous that provides spiritual proof of their worthiness to enter the kingdom of God's Son.<sup>18</sup>

***II Thessalonians 1:6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;***

Whenever God's people are greatly troubled, the Lord finds it just to recompense tribulation to those troubling them. Hence, God counts it as a *righteous thing* to recompense tribulation to all who trouble His children. All fathers maintain a right to defend their own, and our heavenly Father is no different. What men sow they will also reap;<sup>19</sup> therefore, any

who incite trouble and bring persecution against the people of God will have their own tribulations recompensed to them by God. This is a righteous, equitable, and fitting response by the Lord, and He will do exactly as He promises to do.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Thess. 1:6) Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you—*The sense is: "There will be a future judgment, because it is proper that God should punish those who now persecute you. It is not right that they should go unpunished, and triumph forever. It is not an arbitrary thing, a thing which is indifferent, a thing which may or may not be done; it is a just and proper thing that the wicked should be punished."

It is a false assumption of sinners that the Lord has no right to punish the wicked. But does not human law regularly engage in punishing lawbreakers? Should heaven then be restricted from punishing the wicked, as the earth does its criminals? Should not the Lord be afforded the same right to execute heavenly justice as human authorities rightly punish those who commit earthly crimes? It is thus unreasonable to assume that God should not be allowed the same right that men possess in order to maintain a civil society in which both sin and crime must be pun-

<sup>16</sup> Isa. 46:9–10 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, <sup>10</sup>Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

Acts 17:26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

Dan. 4:35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

Ps. 135:6 Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.

Isa. 14:24 The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:

<sup>17</sup> Matt. 10:24 The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.

John 13:16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

John 15:20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

<sup>18</sup> Matt. 5:10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>19</sup> Gal. 6:7–8 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. <sup>8</sup>For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

ished lest evil completely overtake good. For the Lord then to punish the wicked<sup>20</sup> is not only not an unrighteous thing, but is in fact a very holy and righteous thing.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, II Thess. 1:6) people themselves believe that it is just that the wicked should be punished. They are constantly making laws, and affixing penalties to them, and executing them, under the belief that it is right. Can they regard it as wrong in God to do the same thing? Can that be wrong in him which is right in themselves?

Who could consider anyone truly loving who turned a blind eye to sin and did not bring justice to the victim? Is not justice a part of love? And how could God truly be love if He remained unjust, through allowing those who do harm to go free? Ultimately God has reserved the right to punish the wicked even when they join together to commit it. *Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered* (Prov. 11:21). All sin is against the Lord<sup>21</sup> and His law and therefore shall not be tolerated by Him. This is the truth, even though many who regularly engage in sin vainly hope it should not be. *And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible* (Isa. 13:11). Regarding sin, it also makes no difference if the sinner is

a priest, prophet, or pastor—all breaking of divine law will receive the same righteous and just punishment. Whoever then commits evil sets himself up to be punished for it. Thus, just as those who do good are rewarded by the Lord<sup>22</sup> for their good deeds, so shall those who engage in evil be equally recompensed for the damage they have done.<sup>23</sup> *And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings* (Hos. 4:9).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Hos. 4:9) The bad priest copies the sins which he should reprove, and excuses himself by the frailty of our common nature. The people, acutely enough, detect the worldliness or self-indulgence of the priest, and shelter themselves under his example. Their defense stands good before people; but what before God? Alike in sin, priest and people should be alike in punishment.

**II Thessalonians 1:7** *And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,*

There is nothing Christians look forward to more than the Son of God's return from heaven. It is this that is the Christian's true hope, in which also he will discover deep spiritual rest. The *rest* that Paul speaks of that both he and the other apostles possessed is the *rest* produced when one re-

20 Isa. 13:11 *And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.*

Isa. 3:11 *Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him.*

Ps. 145:20 *The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.*

21 Ps. 51:4 *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.* Josh. 7:20 *And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done:*

Judg. 10:10 *And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim.*

22 Ps. 58:11 *So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.*

Prov. 11:18 *The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.*

Prov. 13:21 *Evil pursueth sinners: but to the righteous good shall be repayed.*

23 Col. 3:25 *But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.*

## The Dead Shall Rise

mains confident and has strong faith in Jesus Christ's being revealed from heaven, bringing with Him the power and glory of heaven. Accompanying Jesus in His return in glory will be angels of might, or *mighty angels*. This heavenly accompaniment of heaven's servants returning with the Son of God reveals Christ's ultimate authority over all of God's creation.<sup>24</sup> The presence of these heavenly companions is not needed to raise the dead but rather to assist the Son in rendering punishment on those who have rejected His reign. *For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works* (Matt. 16:27). Jesus' return in the glory of God therefore is purposed for displaying to the world the spiritual glory of the Father and His sovereignty over all of creation.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Matt. 16:27) He will come in glory the glory of his Father the majesty with which God is accustomed to appear, and which befits God. He will be attended by angels. He will judge all people.*

There is a certain glory, brilliance, and radiance that God alone possesses, and this divine and heavenly glory will be made astonishingly visible in the Son at His second coming. It will therefore be as God that the Son will judge the world. By openly displaying the Lord's brilliant glory to the earth's inhabitants, Jesus will commu-

nicate to all mankind His divine appointment to represent the Father, proven also by His coming in the Father's own glory. In truth it is Jesus Christ Who has been given by God the universal authority to judge both the dead and living,<sup>25</sup> to then stand as God judging the entire world.<sup>26</sup> No doubt, this celestial display of heavenly might will cause all those who have rejected Jesus Christ's rule to tremble as they visibly observe the very one they despised as Him Whom God has glorified. *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him* (Ps. 2:12).

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Ps. 2:12) The practice of kissing the hand of a monarch is not uncommon in European courts as a token of allegiance. The meaning here is that they should express their allegiance to the Son of God, or recognize him as the authorized King, with suitable expressions of submission and allegiance; that they should receive him as King, and submit to his reign. Applied to others, it means that they should embrace him as their Saviour.*

*Lest he be angry*—If you do not acknowledge his claims, and receive him as the Messiah.

*And ye perish from the way*—The word *from* in this place is supplied by the translators. It is literally, "And ye perish the way." See the notes at Psalm 1:6.<sup>27</sup> The meaning here seems to be either "lest ye are lost in respect

<sup>24</sup> *Matt. 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Eph. 1:20–22 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup>Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: <sup>22</sup>And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,*

*Col. 1:16–17 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: <sup>17</sup>And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*

<sup>25</sup> *Acts 10:42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.*

<sup>26</sup> *John 5:22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:*

*Acts 17:31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ps. 1:6 For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.*

to the way,” that is, the way to happiness and salvation; or “lest ye fail to find the way” to life; or “lest ye perish by the way,” to wit, before you reach your destination, and accomplish the object you have in view. The design seems to be to represent them as pursuing a certain journey or path—as life is often represented (compare Psalm 1:1<sup>28</sup>)—and as being cut down before they reached the end of their journey.

*When his wrath is kindled*—When his wrath burns. Applying to anger or wrath a term which is common now, as when we speak of one whose anger is heated, or who is hot with wrath.

Since all judgment has been committed to the Son, those without a relationship with Him will quickly become aware of their eternal fate at His coming. Today all men are commanded to repent for their sin, lest on the Lord’s appointed day they will have to endure His wrath. As the Son of man,<sup>29</sup> Jesus has inherited the right to judge all mankind, and as the Son of God He has been given the divine and inherited right to rule all of creation in God’s stead.<sup>30</sup> All men, therefore, regardless of their natural state, whether living or dead, will one day be required to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. *Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead* (I Pet. 4:5). It is in accordance with divine will that the entirety of mankind must stand before the

judgment seat of both the Son of man and the Son of God. *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad* (II Cor. 5:10).

(*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*, II Cor. 5:10) Before we receive our eternal allotment it is proper that we should render our account of the manner in which we have lived, and of the manner in which we have improved our talents and privileges. In the nature of things, it is proper that we should undergo a trial before we receive our reward, or before we are punished; and God has made it necessary and certain, by his direct and positive appointment, that we should stand at the bar of the final judge; see Romans 14:10.<sup>31</sup>

The solemnity of this occasion should prompt all to deeply ponder what and who they are living for, since all religious sincerity will be tested and all religious hypocrisy will be revealed. The Scripture states that nothing will remain covered that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be made known.<sup>32</sup> It is this divine justice that the righteous crave. It is this divine justice that the ungodly despise. More than anything else, the Lord’s people greatly desire divine justice to be brought forth in the earth.<sup>33</sup> Jesus’ coming in the clouds and in the Father’s glory<sup>34</sup> will reveal that this time has arrived.

28 Ps. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*

29 John 5:27 *And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.*

Matt. 16:27–28 *For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.* <sup>28</sup>*Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.*

30 Phil. 2:9–11 *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: <sup>10</sup>That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; <sup>11</sup>And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

31 Rom. 14:10 *But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*

32 Luke 12:2 *For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.*

33 Rev. 6:10 *And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?*

34 Mark 13:26 *And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.*

**II Thessalonians 1:8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:**

The object of Christ's vengeance and punishment will be upon those who have rejected His rule. It is not a small thing to set at naught the good news of the gospel, nor is it an insignificant action to choose to disobey Him Whom God has appointed to rule the world. Undoubtedly most men do not consider it a great offense to reject either Jesus' rule or His gospel. Yet the Scripture is clear that divine punishment awaits all who though they knew the will of God, manifested in the person of God's Son, still rejected it. Understandably, there will be greater consequences for rejecting Jesus Christ and His gospel than even when Israel rejected Moses and the Mosaic law given to him.<sup>35</sup> The reason for this is that Jesus, the Son of God, is greater in might, glory, and heavenly rank than Moses, who was only the Lord's servant. *Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he*

*was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?* (Heb. 10:29). Therefore despising and rejecting the greatest representative of God, God's only begotten Son, will result in being worthy of greater judgment by Him.

*(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Heb. 10:29) Shall he be thought worthy.*—Better, shall he be accounted (or, judged) worthy, by God the Judge of all, when "the Day" shall come. In the act of apostasy the sinner trampled under foot the Son of God, treated with contempt and scorn Him to whom belongs this highest Name (Hebrews 1:1–4);<sup>36</sup> and the principle of this act becomes the principle of the whole succeeding life. That "blood" by which the new covenant was established (Hebrews 9:15–17)<sup>37</sup>—the blood in which he himself had received the sanctification which the law could not give—he has esteemed an unholy thing. There is no medium between highest reverence and utter contumely in such a case: to those who did not receive Jesus as Lord He was a deceiver (Matthew 27:63),<sup>38</sup> and one who deserved to die.

That Christ is said to return to the earth *in flaming fire* reveals that through *fire* the purification of the earth and its sin will be accomplished. Just as fire purifies,<sup>39</sup> so

35 Ezek. 20:13 *But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them.*

Dan. 9:11 *Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.*

36 Heb. 1:1–4 *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high: Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.*

37 Heb. 9:15–17 *And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.*

38 Matt. 27:63 *Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.*

39 Zech. 13:9 *And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.*

shall the Son of God return purify and cleanse the world of all unholiness and unrighteousness. And just as Jesus' baptism of the Holy Spirit is associated with fire,<sup>40</sup> so shall He also, through His own fiery and just indignation, judge the wicked.

*(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, II Thess. 1:8) In flaming fire*—Greek, “In flame of fire”; or, as other oldest manuscripts read, “in fire of flame.” This flame of fire accompanied His manifestation in the bush (Ex 3:2);<sup>41</sup> also His giving of the law at Sinai (Ex 19:18).<sup>42</sup> Also it shall accompany His revelation at His advent (Da 7:9, 10),<sup>43</sup> symbolizing His own bright glory and His consuming vengeance against His foes (Heb 10:27; 12:29; 2Pe 3:7, 10).<sup>44</sup>

*taking*—literally, “giving” them, as their portion, “vengeance.”

*know not God*—the Gentiles primarily (Ps 79:6; Ga 4:8; 1Th 4:5);<sup>45</sup> not of course those involuntarily not knowing God, but those wilfully not knowing Him, as Pharaoh, who might have known God if he would, but who boasted “I know not the Lord” (Ex 5:2);<sup>46</sup> and as the heathen persecutors who might have known God by the preaching of those whom they persecuted. Secondarily, all who “profess to know God but in works deny Him” (Tit 1:16).<sup>47</sup>

*obey not the gospel*—primarily the unbelieving Jews (Ro 10:3, 16);<sup>48</sup> secondarily, all who obey not the truth (Ro 2:8).<sup>49</sup>

*I Pet. 1:7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:*

*Rev. 3:18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.*

*40 Matt 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:*

*Luke 3:16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:*

*41 Exod. 3:2 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.*

*42 Exod. 19:18 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.*

*43 Dan. 7:9–10 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.<sup>10</sup> A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.*

*44 Heb. 10:27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.*

*Heb. 12:29 For our God is a consuming fire.*

*II Pet. 3:7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*

*II Pet. 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

*45 Ps. 79:6 Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.*

*Gal. 4:8 Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.*

*I Thess. 4:5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:*

*46 Exod. 5:2 And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.*

*47 Tit. 1:16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.*

*48 Rom. 10:3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*

*Rom. 10:16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?*

*49 Rom. 2:8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,*

## *The Dead Shall Rise*

Because Jesus has been declared the Son of God,<sup>50</sup> and has been given all judgment over man, it is paramount that men respond to His authority as God. For there will be none who will be able to escape the Son of God's wrath if they have rejected His rule. Simply put, all those who refuse to come under the government of the Son of God, Who is God's most vital representative of Himself, will have to endure His wrath.

***II Thessalonians 1:9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;***

The punishment that will be executed on all who chose not to obey the gospel of Jesus Christ will be their eternal removal from His presence. By this is meant that sinners will be given no part nor any share in the eternal light<sup>51</sup> and life<sup>52</sup> that are Christ's.

*(Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, II Thess. 1:5–10) The Lord Jesus will in that day appear from heaven. He will come in the glory and power of the upper world. His light will be piercing, and his power consuming, to all who in that day shall be found as chaff. This appearance will be terrible to those that know not God, especially to those who rebel against revelation, and obey not the gospel of*

our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the great crime of multitudes, the gospel is revealed, and they will not believe it; or if they pretend to believe, they will not obey it. Believing the truths of the gospel, is in order to our obeying the precepts of the gospel. Though sinners may be long spared, they will be punished at last. They did sin's work, and must receive sin's wages.

***II Thessalonians 1:10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.***

It will be the redemption of the saved that ultimately redounds to the glory of the Son. Hence, just as Jesus' return will bring glory to all saved by Him,<sup>53</sup> so will all those saved by Christ even further reflect Christ's own glory. It will be therefore Jesus Christ Who at His coming glorifies believers, and then they—after Jesus' being revealed in glory and being given their own spiritual transformation—bring further praise, glory, and honor to Christ. Appropriately, the salvation of Christ's people will be counted as His most prized victory. Through their heavenly transformation<sup>54</sup> the world will come to know and spiritually realize the heavenly power and everlasting glory that God has conferred upon the Son, when men who were sinners before faith in Jesus Christ are trans-

<sup>50</sup> Rom. 1:4 *And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:*

<sup>51</sup> John 12:46 *I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. John 1:4–5 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.*

John 8:12 *Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*

<sup>52</sup> John 14:6 *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

John 11:25 *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:*

*I John 5:11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

<sup>53</sup> Col. 3:4 *When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*

<sup>54</sup> I Cor. 15:51–52 *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, <sup>52</sup>In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

formed into becoming a new race of man, created after Christ's own image.<sup>55</sup>

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Thess. 1:10) When he shall come to be glorified in his saints — That is, the redeemed in that day will be the means of promoting his glory, or the universe will see his glory manifested in their redemption. His chief glory as seen in that day will be connected with the fact that he has redeemed his people;*

***II Thessalonians 1:11 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:***

Paul's prayer is that the Thessalonians' faith and spiritual walk would continue growing so that they might be found worthy of their heavenly calling. It is *the work of faith*, which work is also the work of God, through which sinners discover eternal acceptance with God.<sup>56</sup> Paul's prayer is accordingly that through the Thessalonians' continued *faith*, they would eventually enter all the good that the Lord had prepared for them. Hence, if the Thessalonians continued to believe, this would in the end find them worthy of the Lord and enable them to fully enter into all the heavenly goodness purposed for them by the Lord. By faith men enter into God's promises,<sup>57</sup> and through faith they are found worthy of them.

***II Thessalonians 1:12 That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in***

*55 Phil. 3:20–21 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: <sup>21</sup>Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

*56 Rom. 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

*57 Heb. 6:12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

*58 Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

*John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

*Col. 1:19–20 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; <sup>20</sup>And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.*

*you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

The center of all true Christian religion is Jesus Christ. It is He Who is the center and author of God's salvation,<sup>58</sup> without which no man can enter heaven. Whereas the whole world seeks to promote its own name and glorify themselves, those saved by the Son of God are purposed to bring others' attention, gaze, and interest to Him Who has through His own spiritual sacrifice saved them.

*(Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, II Thess. 1:12) and ye in him] This glorification will be mutual. It will be the honour of the Head to have such members, and of the members to have such a Head;*

For those truly saved by the Son of God, it is Christ's name, not their own, that will be sought to be exalted. Nothing proves true Christian piety more than Jesus' name being glorified in His people. It is this exaltation of the Son that ultimately reveals those who have truly been begotten by God. For none will both willingly and joyfully praise the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, unless first saved by Him. Ultimately for Christians, this act of glorying in Jesus Christ is natural, but for non-Christians it is actually impossible. *Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost (I Cor. 12:3).*

## The Dead Shall Rise

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Cor. 12:3) *And that no man can say . . .* — That is, that it cannot occur, or even happen, that anyone will acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah who is not influenced by the Holy Spirit. The meaning is, not that no one has physical ability to say that Jesus is Lord unless aided by the Holy Spirit, since all people can say this; but that no one will be disposed heartily to say it; no one will acknowledge him as their Lord; it can never happen that anyone will confess him as the true Messiah who has not been brought to this state by the agency of the Holy Spirit.

*Is the Lord*—Is the Messiah; or shall acknowledge him as their Lord.

*But by the Holy Ghost* — Unless he is influenced by the Holy Spirit. This is a very important verse, not only in regard to the particular subject under consideration in the time of Paul, but also in its practical bearing at present. We may learn from it:

(1) That it is a proof that any man is under the influence of the Holy Spirit who is heartily disposed to honor the name and work of Jesus Christ.

(2) those forms and modes of religion; those religious opinions and practices, will be most in accordance with the designs of the Spirit of God, which do most to honor the name and work of Jesus Christ.

(3) it is true that no man will ever cherish a proper regard for Jesus Christ, nor love his name and work, unless he is influenced by the Holy Spirit. No man loves the name and work of the Redeemer by following simply the inclinations of his own corrupt heart. In all instances of those who have been brought to a willingness to honor him, it has been by the agency of the Holy Spirit.

If men cannot even proclaim Jesus Christ as their Lord, absent the agency of the Holy Spirit, then it is nonsense to believe that any would praise Christ until saved by Him. Hence, all true Christians will be made visible, first by their confession of Jesus Christ as being their Lord, and second by their joyfulness in glorying in the Son of God.