

2 Thessalonians 1:6-8a Jesus' Return

1

Introduction

Last week we looked at how the church of Thessalonica had held up under persecution. Even though the cost of following Christ was high, these believers refused to abandon their faith. It was a church filled with love for one another.

We closed that the persecution they were facing were part of God's plan. This is not the end of the story. He will punish those who persecute the church. We need to remain faithful and wait for His coming!

2

2 Thessalonians 1:6-10

Since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, ⁷ and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, ⁸ in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, ¹⁰ when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

3

Jesus' Return

1 Thessalonians 1:6-7

Since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, ⁷ and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,

Jesus is going to come again, and He will pour out His righteous judgment upon the world. We will return to this theme of judgment, but let's focus on the Jesus' return.

The Old Testament is filled with descriptions of Messiah's Kingdom. The New Testament explains how Jesus was rejected and nailed to the cross which was necessary for mankind's redemption. However, God keeps His word, and Jesus will return to set up His Kingdom.

4

Jesus' Return

1 Thessalonians 1:6-7

Since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you,⁷ and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,

Jesus will also return for His bride (the church) and celebrate the 7-year wedding feast of the Lamb.

The return of Jesus Christ is therefore the climax of all redemptive history. Paul reminded the Thessalonians of this great hope to encourage them to stand firm despite the severe persecution they were undergoing. Their hope, like that of all suffering Christians, was that Jesus would return and bring them relief.

5

Jesus' Return

1 Thessalonians 1:6-7

Since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you,⁷ and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,

Currently, **the glory of our Lord is hidden**, and most people believe He is dead (cf. Acts 25:19). Even believers do not experience the fullness of His glorious presence, for as Peter writes, “whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory” (1 Peter 1:8). But the day is coming when He will be revealed, both to believers and to unbelievers.

6

Jesus' Return

1 Thessalonians 1:6-7

Since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, ⁷ and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,

Paul declares that **the Lord Jesus will be revealed**. Revealed carries the idea of manifesting what was previously hidden or secret (cf. Rom. 2:5; 16:25; 1 Cor. 14:6; 2 Cor. 12:1, 7; Gal. 1:12; Eph. 3:3). The One who has been hidden will be revealed in all His sovereign glory to a world that does not know or worship Him. He will be unveiled as Judge (v. 8).
This will be the Day of the Lord.

7

Jesus' Return

1 Thessalonians 1:6-7

Since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, ⁷ and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,

At His first coming, the reality of His deity was hidden. Though Jesus was God incarnate, He was veiled in human flesh. As a result, "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him" (John 1:10). But there will be no mistaking the reality of who Jesus is at His second coming, for the whole world will "see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:30). Throughout history there have been (and will continue to be) false christs (cf. Matt. 24:24). But nothing they can do comes remotely close to matching the Shekinah glory that will be manifested when Christ returns.

8

Jesus' Return – From Heaven

1 Thessalonians 1:6-8a

Since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, ⁷ and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, ⁸ in flaming fire

Paul uses three phrases to describe the return of Jesus.

First, from heaven. Just as He ascended visibly, bodily into heaven, so Jesus will return from heaven visibly, bodily to earth.

Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, ¹¹ who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”

(Acts 1:9–11)

9

Jesus' Return – From Heaven

1 Thessalonians 1:6-8a

Since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, ⁷ and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, ⁸ in flaming fire

Jesus ascended into heaven and **now sits at the right hand of the throne of the Father.** (Heb. 8:1; cf. 1:3; 10:12; 12:2; Acts 2:33; 7:55–56; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; 1 Peter 3:22).

From that exalted position of power and honor, Jesus **intercedes for His people** (Rom. 8:34; cf. Isa. 53:12; Heb. 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1), and from that heavenly throne He will one day return to **judge His enemies** (Matt. 16:27; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rom. 2:16; 2 Tim. 4:1).

10

Jesus' Return – With Angels

1 Thessalonians 1:6-8a

Since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, ⁷ and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, ⁸ in flaming fire

Jesus will not return solo on the Day of the Lord, but with His mighty angels (lit., “the angels of His power”). Angels often appeared with God in the both the Old and New Testaments. Angels are instruments through whom the Son’s power is delegated to accomplish His purposes, in that case, judgment.

The New Testament reveals that angels will accompany Jesus when He returns, just as He predicted in Matthew 16:27: “For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.” In another description of the Second Coming, Jesus said, “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him ...” (Matt. 25:31; cf. Mark 8:38). When Jesus returns, “And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matt. 24:31). Angels will not only gather the elect for blessing but also unbelievers for judgment.

11

Jesus' Return – With Angels

1 Thessalonians 1:6-8a

Since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, ⁷ and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, ⁸ in flaming fire

The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, ⁴² and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.... So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, ⁵⁰ and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. (Matt. 13:41–42, 49–50)

12

Jesus' Return – With Flaming Fire

1 Thessalonians 1:6-8a

Since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you,⁷ and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,⁸ in flaming fire

Finally, when the Lord Jesus Christ returns from heaven with the holy angels He will return in flaming fire. The fire described here is the fire of judgment (as in Isa. 66:16; Matt. 3:12; 13:30; Heb. 10:27; 2 Peter 3:7, 10). When God appeared to give the Law to Israel, “Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently” (Ex. 19:18; cf. Deut. 4:33; 5:4, 24–26; 18:16). The **fire** of God’s judgment is so closely associated with God’s nature that Scripture declares, “The Lord your God is a consuming fire” (Deut. 4:24; cf. 9:3; Heb. 12:29).

13

Jesus' Return – Deity

1 Thessalonians 1:6-8a

Since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you,⁷ and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,⁸ in flaming fire

These three modifying phrases provide striking confirmation of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. He will return **from heaven**, where He is seated on the throne of God (Rev. 3:21). He will return with the same **mighty angels** who attend and serve only God; they are also **His** angels. Finally, Jesus Christ will return **in** the same **flaming fire** that marked God’s glorious presence. By associating with the Son, the realities characteristic of the Father, the apostle affirms Jesus’ deity as the Second Person of the Trinity.

14

Jesus' Return – Results

1 Thessalonians 1:6-8a

Since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you,⁷ and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,⁸ in flaming fire

Christ's return will thus produce two radically different results.

For the unbeliever, Christ's return will bring judgment, punishment, and repay with tribulation those who trouble you. Those who persecute the church will receive the rewards of their unrighteous actions.

For believers, Christ's return will bring sweet relief, rest, refreshment, and peace.

15

So What ...

The world and the church have been lulled to sleep.

1 Peter 2:3-7

Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,⁴ and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation."⁵ For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water,⁶ by which the world *that* then existed perished, being flooded with water.⁷ But the heavens and the earth *which* are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

Are you ready if Jesus were to return today?

16