

## 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10 — The Just Judgment Of God

**September 15, 2024**

Good morning, CrossWinds! Last week, we began a new study in the book of 2 Thessalonians. We looked at the background of the city of Thessalonica and the church in Thessalonica. Thessalonica was a young church. Paul was only in the city three Sabbaths until the Jews of the city hired thugs from the local marketplace to spread lies about him and run him out of town. Paul left and traveled to another city, the city of Berea. There, he began sharing the good news of Jesus, which was well received. The book of Acts tells us that when the Jews in Thessalonica heard he was teaching about Jesus in Berea, they went on a road trip. When they arrived at the city, they spread false lies about him and had him run out of that city, too.

While they succeeded in running Paul out of two towns, the young church in Thessalonica remained, and they were taking the heat. The Jews now falsely accused them. They incited the city leaders to oppose them. They boycotted their businesses. They rough them up with mob violence in the crowd. The picture we have is that it was hard to be a Christian in the city of Thessalonica. All the Christians in the city were new to the faith.

Last week, in 2 Thessalonians, Paul began the letter by saying how thankful he was that despite all the suffering the new church in Thessalonica faced, their faith was intact. It was growing. This is because of a principle we learned last week. *It is genuine that Christians grow closer to Jesus in hard times. Those with fake faith fall away from Jesus in hard times.* This principle did not just hold true for the Thessalonians in the first century, but it holds true for us

as well. Trials, troubles, and suffering either demonstrate the authenticity of our faith as they draw us closer to Jesus, or they reveal that we have fake faith when during them we fall away from Jesus.

We ended last week by dipping our toes into the subject we will cover this morning, which is God's just judgment. Last week, we finished with verse five.

This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering— 2 Thessalonians 1:5 (ESV)

Paul told them that all the sufferings, afflictions, loneliness, and heartache they were going through were not being wasted by God. On the contrary, God was using those adversities to draw them closer to God and fashion them into the image of God. When you go through hard times, don't they lead us to pray more? When we go through hard times, don't we read the Bible more? In times of suffering, aren't we quicker to see sin in our lives and repent of it? When we suffer, don't we find ourselves more compassionate toward others? For the Christian, suffering is never pointless. No wounds are wasted. God uses them to shape us into the image of Jesus, the kind of person we will be for all eternity.

While God uses the evil done against us to make us more like Jesus, what about those who commit this evil? Do they simply get away with it? This brings us to this morning's text and the topic of the just judgment of God. The purpose of these verses is to comfort the Thessalonians as they suffer and remind them that those committing atrocious evil against them will not get away with it forever. The just judgment of God is coming. Let's read our text.

This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering— since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant

relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. 2 Thessalonians 1:5–10 (ESV)

This paragraph is not just intended to comfort the Thessalonians but also to teach them about God's justice. It is not as apparent in English, but it is clear in Greek. The Greek word for just and justice occurs four times in these verses. Verse seven tells us when God's justice will be carried out: "When Jesus is revealed from heaven." Let's begin by looking at Jesus' return.

### **Jesus is coming back.**

...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire,... 2 Thessalonians 1:7–8 (ESV)

History will not go on forever. There is a climax of history. It is when Jesus returns. Right now, Jesus is in heaven. He is seated at the right hand of God, but he is coming back. In these verses, when Paul speaks of the return of Jesus to judge the world, he says that when Jesus returns, he will be revealed. The Greek word for reveal is the word apocalypse. It means the unveiling of someone they have not known. It is when people will see Jesus for who he is, in all of his might and glory. One commentator described it this way. To those who don't know Jesus, His return will look like a supernatural invasion from outer space.

The first time Jesus came, his glory and power were veiled. If you looked in Jesus' crib in Bethlehem, you would have seen a baby, nothing more. Growing up, you would have seen Jesus as an ordinary young boy. He was the son of a husband and wife who looked ordinary. If you were there, you would have seen

Jesus walking the dusty paths. You would have seen him sweat, eat, and need to sleep. Nothing on the surface revealed Jesus true identity as the son of God, the creator and sustainer of the universe. Jesus' glory was veiled the first time he came.

The next time Jesus comes, it will be different. There will be no Bethlehem, no manger, no carpenter shop, no poverty, no dusty roads, no soldiers pounding nails into his calloused hands. The next time Jesus comes, it will be an apocalypse. He will arrive, revealing all of his might, glory, and power.

It never ceases to amaze me how fake religious leaders throughout history repeatedly claim to be Jesus. Apparently, they don't know much about Jesus' return. When Jesus returns, his glory will be hidden by his humanity. It will be revealed and on full display. These people are fruitcakes.

Verse seven gives us three descriptions of what it will be like when Jesus return.

...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire,... 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8 (ESV)

**Jesus will be revealed from heaven.**

...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven... 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8 (ESV)

The first time Jesus came, he came by natural birth. The second time he comes, it will be from heaven. It will be visible. It will be a supernatural arrival.

and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." Acts 1:11 (ESV)

Just as Jesus went up to heaven in his ascension, he will return from heaven to earth when he comes back. It will be impressive.

Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Matthew 24:30 (ESV)

Notice Jesus' return will be with power and great glory.

**Jesus will come back with his angels.**

...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels...  
2 Thessalonians 1:7–8 (ESV)

When Jesus comes back, he will not be by himself. He will have his posse of angels with him. They will not be second-rate angels. They will be the mighty angels.

I should point out that the ESV says Jesus is coming back “with his mighty angels.” In Greek, it reads, “the angels of his might.” The Greek is clear that the angels that return with Jesus do not accompany him to help him. The angels do not have power or ability in themselves. They only have power, ability, and might because Jesus gives it to them. The power of Jesus is manifested through them. They have their might because it is given to them by Jesus.

There is going to be a massive number of angels returning with Jesus

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.” Matthew 25:31 (ESV)

It seems likely that when Jesus returns, every angel in the vast universe will accompany him. That will be impressive.

For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. Matthew 16:27 (ESV)

Here, we read that Jesus will come back with his angels. Earlier, we read that Jesus will come back with all the angels. It sounds like there is a subset of angels that are Jesus' angels. Will he only return with them? Is that the case?

These verses are not in contradiction. If you know from Hebrews 1, Jesus is the one who created all the angels. All of the angels are Jesus' angels. When Jesus returns with all of his angels, that is the same things as saying Jesus will return with all of the angels because all of the angels were created by Jesus.

**Jesus will come in flaming fire.**

**...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire,... 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8 (ESV)**

There is the fire of God's judgment. That is not what is spoken of here. This is the fire of God's presence. Did you know that God, when he unveils his glory, is fire?

This is the same fire we see in Exodus 32, when the angel of the Lord was in the presence of the burning bush and spoke to Moses from the bush. If you have been with us over the years, you know the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament is the appearance of Jesus before Bethlehem. The bush was on fire because of Jesus' presence, but it was not burned up. That was fire of the presence of the pre-incarnate Jesus.

When God came down on Mount Sinai to give the Ten Commandments to Moses, we have the fire of God's presence again.

**Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the Lord had descended on it in fire. Exodus 19:18 (ESV)**

The book of Hebrews summarizes the presence of God's glory this way.  
**for our God is a consuming fire. Hebrews 12:29 (ESV)**

The point Paul is making is that Jesus' return will be spectacular in every sense of the word. Jesus will return in might, in power, in glory, from heaven, will all the mighty angels, and in flaming fire. I think that will get everyone's attention.

Paul says to the Thessalonians and to us, I know life is hard. You feel discouraged and overwhelmed. You are suffering. You are weak. As you suffer in the present, don't lose sight of Jesus' return in the future. Jesus is coming back. When he comes, it will be an apocalypse. It will be with unimaginable power, glory, angels, and fire. Everyone is going to see him. Jesus is coming back.

This event will produce two results.

### **Jesus' return will bring relief to some and retribution to others.**

...God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven... 2 Thessalonians 1:6–7 (ESV)

### **Jesus' return will bring relief to those who love Him.**

The Greek word for relief means the absence of tension and difficulty. It was used to describe the release of tension on the string of a bow. When Jesus comes, for Christians, it will be a relief. Sorrow will be over. Suffering will be finished. Anxiety about the future will no longer be part of our lives. There will be no more pain, suffering, and disease. Death will be finished. It will be a time of joy forever.

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. Revelation 21:4 (ESV)

### **Jesus' return will bring retribution for those who don't love Him.**

Paul tells the Thessalonians to endure hard times and keep their eyes focused on Jesus' return, which will be a time of relief, but he has to tell the rest of the story. For others, Jesus' return will not be a time of relief. It will be a time of retribution. That is a big word. It means to pay back with vengeance and punishment. The return of Jesus for non-Christians will be a time of great pain.

For some of this seems inconsistent with our understanding of Jesus. We like the idea of Jesus coming to bring relief and do away with sin and its effects on the world, but we don't like the idea of Jesus returning to bring retribution. Let's talk about retribution and punishment for sin.

**Only God can carry out just punishment.**

Understand that the retribution spoken of in this case means full and just punishment by Jesus. It is not unruly, hostile, selfish, or overdone by passion that leads to an overdone response to sin. It is a completely just punishment for sin.

We can not give a just response to the sin done against us because our emotions cloud our judgment. We do not know all the circumstances behind sin and all the conditions that brought about a particular sin. It is impossible for us to personally have a just response to people who sin against us. God is different. He is omniscient. He knows all circumstances, all thoughts, and all motives. When we are sinned against, we can not render a just response to that sin. Only Jesus, as God, when he returns, can render a perfectly just response to sin.

If only Jesus, when he returns, can render a perfectly just response to sin, what should we do about the sin done against us until Jesus returns? The Bible tells us.

**God has temporarily delegated just punishment for sin to the government.**

In Romans, Paul says God gives the government the responsibility to create a just society and to carry out vengeance against sin.

But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Romans 13:4 (ESV)



This is why we have judges, juries, lawyers, and verdicts that are a long time in coming. It is painstaking work to go through the examination and cross-examination of people to discover what is a just response to sin.

As we know, the government often does not always execute perfect justice. Many times they, pervert justice. Lady Justice is supposed to be blind, but often she peaks.

If justice is hard for the government to carry out, it is infinitely harder for us to be in a position to carry it out. We do not know enough information. We are often too biased.

Assuming a hurt done against us does not rise to the level of a government court case, what are we to do about those who personally sin against us?

**We are to leave personal vengeance to God.**

The Bible tells us to leave vengeance to God.

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord. Romans 12:19 (ESV)

Instead of getting even with those who hurt us, the Bible tells us we are to go out of our way to do good to those who hurt us. We have to leave justice to God on the day he returns.

We are to not just leave justice to God, but while we wait for Jesus' return, there is something we are to do to our enemies.

**We are to do good to our enemies.**

But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. Matthew 5:39–40 (ESV)

Whatever our personal enemies do to us, we don't persecute them. We love them in return. There is a time when vengeance for their sin coming. Jesus is coming back, and when he does, he will take care of vengeance. He will do it justly, rightly, and fairly because he is the only one in a position to know what is right.

## **Retribution — Why, Who, and How**

### **Why is Jesus coming back to bring retribution?**

Our passage answers questions about this retribution. The first is, "Why?" Why is Jesus coming back to carry out retribution?

...God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 2 Thessalonians 1:6 (ESV)

It is a matter of justice. It is only right. It is only just for Jesus to hand out punishment to those who have violated God's law and His word.

We understand this in the human realm. We get upset when we criminals are not brought to justice but instead set free. In 2003, George Ryan, the governor of Illinois, used his executive power to set free 160 convicted criminals on death row because of his personal opposition to the death penalty. He set free people who were convicted of multiple murders and horrifying crimes. The families of the victims were outraged. Where is the justice for what they had done?

If we feel outraged when a criminal gets away with murder, imagine how God feels when he sees sin, murder, deception, thievery, and all kinds of injustice in this world. The reason Jesus will carry out retribution against sin when he returns is because it is just. It is fair. It is right.

We must remember that Jesus' response to sin is not vindictive. It is not unfair. It is not an act of exasperation or frustration. It is always just, fair, and right. Only Jesus can carry out perfect justice.

for his judgments are true and just... Revelation 19:2 (ESV)

If you think about it, God wouldn't be righteous and just if Jesus didn't carry out wrath against sin when he returned. Justice is part of God's character. When Jesus hands out judgment everyone in the universe will be forced to admit that when he blesses someone, it was because Jesus paid the just penalty for that person's sin. When he damns someone for eternity, it is nothing more than a perfectly fair response to the sin of their life. No being in the universe will dare to challenge Jesus because his judgment against sin will be so perfect.

**Who will experience Jesus' retribution?**

**Those who afflict Christians.**

...God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 2 Thessalonians 1:6 (ESV)

The Thessalonians were being afflicted for their faith. He encouraged them by saying, "The time will come when Jesus will carry out his vengeance against those who afflict you." Personal vengeance is not allowed. We do good to our enemies. We forgive our enemies. We love our enemies. Know for sure that when Jesus returns, he will take perfect vengeance on those who afflict you.

Who will he repay? Anybody who attacks Christians in any way, shape, or form. It could be burning them at the stake. It could be shipping them off to prison in Siberia where they will die a slow death of cold and starvation. It also includes anyone who destroys the character or reputation of another Christian. It could be

speaking evil of them behind their back. When Jesus returns, he will justly afflict those who afflict Christians in this life.

As I was studying, I ran across a verse that amplifies this in a way we can relate to.

Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. Mark 9:42 (ESV)

Jesus says he will be particularly harsh on those who violate his children, those who lead children to sin. It would be better if they had a big rock around their neck and they were drowned in the depths of the sea. Jesus has a soft spot in his heart for children. His judgment will be especially hard on those who lead children into sin. I think we can all relate to that. If you want to see a parent go completely unhinged, tell them about an adult who led their child into sin. If that is how parents feel about the children they love, know God feels the same way. It won't be pretty for those who lead children astray on the day Jesus returns.

Those who afflict Christians are only part of a larger group that Jesus will carry out vengeance upon when he returns. There are two more groups mentioned in this passage.

#### **Those who do not know God.**

...inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God... 2 Thessalonians 1:8 (ESV)

When Jesus returns, he will inflict his just vengeance on those who do not know God. This is those who have no personal relationship with God. They may imagine they know him. They may claim to know him, but anyone who is not

approaching the God of the universe through Jesus Christ does not know God. This is not my opinion. This is the Word of God.

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6 (ESV)

Anyone who does not know God through Jesus will face retribution on the day when history reaches its climax and Jesus returns.

Some of you will say, "Wait a minute. That is not fair. Many do not have the Bible. They do not know right from wrong. How can Jesus fairly judge them at his return? Others are atheists. They do not even know God exists. How can Jesus fairly judge them? For answers to those questions, we turn to the book of Romans.

The Bible tells us everyone knows right and wrong from their conscience, which is God-given. While everyone knows the basics of right from wrong, they willfully choose to rebel against God.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. Romans 1:18 (ESV)

Everyone knows the basics of morality. They know lying, and deception are wrong. Telling the truth is right. We know these things, yet we make sinful choices. Jesus will hold people accountable for their willful sin.

What about atheists, who didn't know God exists?

For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. Romans 1:19–20 (ESV)

The Bible doesn't take atheism seriously. It tells us it is the fool that says in his heart there is no God.<sup>1</sup> Everyone knows God exists by looking at creation. Just look at the corn, look at the lake, look at the fish, look at yourself in the mirror. Everything around us tells us this world did not come from nothing. Everything around us tells us God made us and the universe around us. We all know God exists. We all know the basics of right from wrong. When Jesus returns, it is not unjust for him to hold people accountable for their willful sin against him.

Hell will be populated just by those who claim to be atheists and those who only know right from wrong by their conscience. Hell will be filled with religious people. Most people in hell will have believed in a god or gods. None of them will have known the true God of the universe. They will have tried to approach God on the merits of their goodness, which is what every other religion is about. That never works. The only way to be made right before God is to trust in Jesus, who paid for our sins because we can not pay for them ourselves.

This is why Satan spends 99% of his time not promoting atheism but false religions. They are the most damning of all. It gives people a false sense of security. They think they are pleasing God by earning his favor through good deeds, but good deeds are not enough to pay for our sins.

So far, we have seen two groups who will experience Jesus's wrath when he returns: those who persecute Christians and those who do not know God. A third group is those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 14:1

## Those who reject the forgiveness of Jesus.

inflicting vengeance... on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 2 Thessalonians 1:8 (ESV)

These are people who have the good news of Jesus but they reject it. They grew up in church. They were taught the gospel by Christians parents or Christian friends but they went their own way.

Possibly the hottest of hell, the most severe of punishments is reserved for those who reject the gospel. It is a fearful thing to be someone the good news of Jesus, but not to care about Jesus. If we reject Jesus, there is no plan "B."

Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? Hebrews 10:28–29 (ESV)

If you think people had it bad when they rejected the Old Testament law, imagine how bad people have it if they reject the only offer of grace, complete forgiveness of sins, and eternal life with Jesus? It is insane to know the truth about Jesus but walk away from Jesus, yet people do it every day. They grow up in the church. They learn the gospel, but they find the world is more alluring. They the lifestyle of their friends is more enticing. They always finding something else to do on Sunday instead of fixing their eyes on Jesus with brothers or sisters in Christ at church. Hebrews summarizes it this way.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Hebrews 10:31 (ESV)

We have seen why Jesus will carrying out just retribution when he returns. It is a matter of justice. We have seen who will experience his justice. That leaves us with the question of how.

## How will Jesus retribution be carried out?

Let's go back to verse 6.

### They will experience affliction.

...God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 2 Thessalonians 1:6 (ESV)

The key word is affliction. In Greek, it means to put under pressure, to squeeze, misery, constant pain, and distress. Paul's point is God is completely fair. As people were squeezing the Thessalonian Christians and making them suffer financially, emotionally, and physically, know that Jesus is fair. He will return to them the afflictions they handed out to Christians. It will be a just and equitable response.

In verse 9, there is additional description of how Jesus will carry out his just vengeance.

### They will experience eternal destruction.

They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction,... 2 Thessalonians 1:9 (ESV)

The punishment will be eternal. It is the Greek word *aion*. It means forever and ever. There is no escape from hell. There are no second chances. Hell is an eternal experience.

Today, some people do not believe hell is eternal. They believe people will either be released from hell at some point in eternity or they will cease to exist in hell. The problem with their opinion is it violates the clear word of God, which says hell is eternal.

The same word used to describe the eternal destruction of hell is used in the Bible to describe our eternal salvation by Jesus.



(Jesus) he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, Hebrews 5:9 (ESV)

If eternal damnation is not eternal, our eternal salvation is not eternal. The same word is used to describe both of them.

Let's look at the second keyword, which is the word "destruction." The word destruction means ruin. It is the idea of always being destroyed but never ceasing to exist. It is the idea of always being burned but the fire never consuming the flesh. It is like putting your hand in the fire and feeling the pain of the burn but the hand never being burned up and ceasing to exist.

This word does not just refer to physical destruction but also to emotional and psychological destruction. It means that hell is separation from all that is beautiful and all that brings joy and happiness. There is no friendship in hell. Other passages of the Bible describe it as utter darkness, complete isolation, and the absence of companionship. Remember that none of this is unfair. It is a completely just response to our sins.

While hell is "hotter" for those who are greater sinners, hell is always eternal, and it is always existing in a perpetual state of ruin and destruction.

**They will experience eternal separation from God's goodness.**

...away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, 2 Thessalonians 1:9 (ESV)

Hell is also described as away from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his might. Look what the book of James says about every pleasure we enjoy in life.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above,... James 1:17 (ESV)

Everything we love in this life comes from God. God is the creator of our sexuality, and he gave us the gift of marriage. He is the creator of the lakes, the fish, and the sunsets we love. He is the creator of food with all its flavors. He is the creator of exercise and animals and the beauty of a star-lit sky. In hell, all of the goodness of God that we love is gone.

Let me clarify one thing that can be misunderstood from this verse. It appears that hell is away from God's presence. I don't think that is what is being said. There is no place in creation that anyone can go to be away from God's presence. Hell is the absence of the goodness of God's presence. It is not a place someone can go to be away from God. Look how Revelation describes hell.

...and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. Revelation 14:10 (ESV)

Jesus and his holy angels are just as much in charge of the wrath of hell as they are the joys of heaven.

Friends, opposing God is not a minor issue. It is a terrifying issue. Jesus is coming back. He will be the judge. When it comes to Jesus retribution on sin, we know the why, who, and how of him carrying it out. Let's briefly look at the other side.

### **Relief — Why, Who, and How**

and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels 2 Thessalonians 1:7 (ESV)

### **Why will Jesus return to bring relief to Christians?**

...God considers it just... to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven... 2 Thessalonians 1:6–7 (ESV)

It is just for Jesus to grant relief to Christians from the afflictions of sin and the presence of sin. It is a matter of justice. It is not just for us to be free from the presence and pressure of sin. It is only just for the penalty and presence of sin to be taken away from us after what Jesus has done for us. Jesus died for our sins. On the cross, he took the eternity of his father's wrath that we deserved. Jesus died in our place for our sins. Now that all our sin is paid for by Jesus, it is only just for us to be released from the oppression of sin by Jesus.

It is not just because of what we deserve. It is just because we are adopted brothers and sisters of Jesus and what now deserve because of Jesus.

#### **Who will experience the relief of Jesus' return?**

and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us,... 2 Thessalonians 1:7 (ESV)

The Thessalonians will experience relief from their suffering when Jesus returns, but it is not just them. So will Paul, Silas, and Timothy. So will all other Christians who have trusted in Jesus. He will give relief from sin to you, to you, and to you.

#### **How will we be rewarded?**

when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed,... 2 Thessalonians 1:10 (ESV)

On the day Jesus returns, he will be glorified in his saints. Earlier we looked at Jesus' glory. Jesus will return with might, power, and splendor. His glory will radiate from him like the sun in the sky. On the day Jesus returns, his glory will not just radiate on us, but it will radiate out of us!

When Jesus returns, he will resurrect the dead bodies of Christians. Look what Philippians tells us our resurrected bodies will be like.

who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body,... Philippians 3:21 (ESV)

Our resurrection bodies will be just like Jesus' resurrection body. We just learned that when Jesus returns in his resurrection body, the splendor and glory of his resurrection body will be revealed. It will be on full display.

Look what Paul says our resurrection bodies will be like on that day. They will be like Jesus' glorious body. The glory of Jesus' resurrection body will not just be radiating on us, but it will be radiating out of us because we are the adopted children of God. We bear the likeness of our elder brother, Jesus.

Look what 2 Corinthians tells us about the glory that will be ours on that day.

For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 2 Corinthians 4:17 (ESV)

We will not have a light dusting of Jesus' glory. We will possess the heavy, heavy, heavy glory of Jesus. It will be a glory beyond all comparison. All of this is ours, not because we deserve any of it in ourselves. It is just for God to give it to us because of what Jesus has done for us. He didn't just forgive us of our sins and separate them from us, but he adopted us into his family, transforming us into the image of Jesus, our elder brother. We have a resurrection body like him and we even radiate his glory for all eternity.

Yesterday, I was visiting the nursing home. In the home is a woman from CrossWinds. Disease has destroyed her body. She can barely get out of bed. She is suffering. She is weak, dependent, and confined to a bed. As I was praying for her, I kept thinking.... This is not the end.

Jesus is coming back. When he does, he will bring her relief. He will transform her withered and weak body, filling it with life, glory, and strength for all of eternity, just like Jesus' resurrection body. He will fill her with glory and splendor that radiates from her because of Jesus in her. What an amazing day it will be for her when Jesus returns.

It won't just be an amazing day for her, but it will be an amazing day for all of us through Jesus.



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