

Home Group Helps

2 Thessalonians 1:6-10

Living in the Light of His Return: The Terrifying Justice of God

⁶ For after all it is *only* just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, ⁷ and *to give* relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, ⁸ dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, ¹⁰ when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed— for our testimony to you was believed.

I. God's Justice Brings Retribution to Unbelievers (v.6, 7c, 8-9) – ⁶ For after all it is *only* just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, . . . when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, ⁸ dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

II. God's Justice Brings About Relief to Believers (v.6a, 7a-b, 10) – ⁶ For after all it is *only* just for God . . . ⁷ and *to give* relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well. . . ¹⁰ when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed— for our testimony to you was believed.

1. Launching Question(s):

- Did the idea of hell play a role in your conversion?

2. Observation Question(s):

- Paul begins this passage with the statement, “for after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction . . .” In other words, he is stating a self-evident truth.
- Do you agree that God's retribution towards unbelievers and God's relief towards believers should be considered a self-evident truth?

3. Interpretation Question(s):

- The Bible is clear that hell is real and that it is an eternal, immediate (no purgatory), conscious experience of unbearable torment and misery for the unbeliever.
- Why do people object to this truth?
- What are some common alternative (unbiblical) beliefs that you have heard about the final judgment?

4. Reflection Question(s):

- Tim Keller remarks, “The Bible says that God's wrath flows from his love and delight in his creation. He is angry at evil and injustice because it is destroying its peace and integrity.”
- Why is it important to understand that God is both a God of wrath as well as a God of love?
- Do you agree that God's wrath and God's love are necessarily connected?

- Yale theologian Miroslav Volf, a Croatian who has seen the violence in the Balkan wars, states, “If God were not angry at injustice and deception and did not make a final end to violence—that God would not be worthy of worship.”
- Do you agree with Volf’s statement?
- Paul attempts to encourage believers with the fact of God’s terrifying justice toward those who persecute the church.
- Does God’s justice encourage you? Does it bring you relief?

5. Application Question(s):

- Paul closes this text by reminding the believers of Thessalonica that “our testimony to you was believed.” In other words, they believed in the Gospel.
- For them to believe, Paul had to evangelize them. Who might you share the Gospel with this coming week?

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