

May 28, 2017
“God is Just”

Focal Passage: 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12
(NASB)

Cross References: Romans 10:6-15; 1 Thessalonians 3:8-13; 4:9-12

Lesson Idea: God’s judgment is just; He will punish unbelievers and reward faithful believers.

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

May 21 Ezra 1-3	May 22 Ezra 4-7
May 23 Ezra 8-10	May 24 Neh 1-3
May 25 Neh 4-6	May 26 Neh 7
May 27 Neh 8-9	May 28 Neh 10-11

Background:

From David Guzik:

The City of Thessalonica. It was founded by Cassander, King of Macedon 315 B. C., and was about a hundred miles west of Philippi. It was a great commercial center of Paul's time, the inhabitants being Greeks, Romans and Jews. It still exists under the name of Saloniki, and has a population of from 75,000 to 85,000 about half of whom are Jews.

The Church of Thessalonica. Upon being delivered from prison at Philippi. Paul continued his second missionary journey to Thessalonica, having also Silas and Timothy with him ([Acts 17:1-5](#)). He spent three Sabbaths there, but on account of the persecution of the Jews, went from there to Berea, then to Athens, and then to Corinth where he spent 18 months. The first letter bears testimony to the splendid Christian character of these new converts from heathenism.

Second Thessalonians.

This letter was also written from Corinth and during the same year (*as the first letter, A.D. 53*). It is the shortest letter Paul wrote to any church and is characterized by its lack of special salutations and for its general idea of patient waiting for our Lord. The occasion seems to be to correct their wrong views of the second coming of Christ and the errors of life growing out of it. It may be that they had misunderstood his own teaching to be that the day of the Lord was already at hand (2:2).

2 Thessalonians 1:1-12

¹ Paul and Silvanus and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: ²Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater; ⁴therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure. ⁵This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. ⁶For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, ⁷and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, ⁸dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, ¹⁰when 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. ¹¹To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power, ¹²so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

DISCUSSION:

- v 1. What does Paul’s greeting teach about the nature of the church?
- v 2. How did you walk in grace and peace this week? What do the names that Paul uses for God and Jesus reveal about the character of God?
- v 3. What was it fitting for Paul and his companions to give thanks for the Thessalonians? How did these descriptions of the church show that they had been obedient to the Word of the Lord through Paul? (see 1 Thessalonians 3:8-13; 4:9-12)
- v 4. What did Paul see in the church of the Thessalonians that made him speak proudly about them? What kind of example do you set for others in your perseverance and faith? What is revealed about your faith during times of persecution and affliction?

- v 5. How does enduring suffering for the sake of the Gospel reveal that someone is considered worthy of the kingdom of God?
- v 5-8. What will God's righteous judgment move Him to do?

NOTE: from Guzik:

Which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God: God's **righteous judgment** was at work among the Thessalonians, beginning at the house of God ([1 Peter 4:17](#)), and purifying them as followers of Jesus. The good result - showing them **worthy of the kingdom of God** - was **manifest evidence** that God was good in allowing them to suffer the *persecutions and tribulations* described in [2 Thessalonians 1:4](#).

We usually think that God is *absent* when we suffer, and that our suffering calls God's righteous judgment into question. Paul took the exact opposite position and insisted that their suffering was **evidence of the righteous judgment of God**. Where suffering is coupled with righteous endurance, God's work is done. The fires of persecution and tribulation were like the purifying fires of a refiner, burning away the dross from the gold, bringing forth a pure, precious metal.

The idea behind **counted worthy** is not "seen as worthy" but "reckoned as worthy" as in a judicial decree. Paul's prayer is that the worthiness of Jesus may be accounted to them.

Since it is a righteous thing with God: Many people question the righteousness of God's judgment. They believe that God's love and His judgment contradict each other. But God's judgment is based on the great spiritual principle that it is a **righteous thing with God to repay** those who do evil. Since God is **righteous**, He will **repay all evil**, and it will all be judged and accounted for either at the cross or in hell.

The judgment of God means that there is nothing unimportant in my life. Everything is under the eye of a God I must answer to. . . "A world in which justice was not done at last would not be God's world at all." (Hiebert)

- v 7. When will our ultimate relief come?
- v 8. What does "retribution" mean? On whom will it come and why?
- v 9. What penalty comes upon those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord

Jesus? How should this truth affect our relationships with people in the world?

- **NOTE:** from Guzik:
- What truly characterizes hell is that there, people are **away from the presence of the Lord**, in the sense of being apart from anything *good or blessed* in God's presence. **From the presence of the Lord** sums up the Bible's understanding of hell. Nothing must be said more about its horrors, other than hell will be completely devoid of God and every aspect of His character, except one: His unrelenting holy justice.
- It is not wrong for God to take **vengeance**; we understand this when understand what the word means in the ancient Greek language. "The word rendered 'vengeance' has no associations of vindictiveness. It is a compound based on the same root as the word rendered 'righteous' in vv. 5, 6, and it has the idea of a firm administration of unwavering justice." (Morris) The idea is the application of *full justice* on the offender; nothing more and nothing less.
- **Everlasting destruction:** We must not be moved from the idea that the punishment of the wicked is **everlasting**. As the blessings of heaven are eternal, the penalty of hell is also eternal. "The perpetual duration of this death is proved from the fact that its opposite is the glory of Christ. This is eternal and has no end." (Calvin)
- v 10. What will happen to believers when Jesus comes again? Why will we "marvel" at Jesus when He comes?
- How does Paul say that the Thessalonians came to believe? Why are the testimonies of believers so important in God's process of salvation? (see Romans 10:6-15)
- v 11-12. What was Paul's continual prayer for the church? How much do you desire goodness, and how is does your daily life reflect that desire?
- Does your faith work with power? Why or why not?

APPLICATION:

- ✓ v 12. How is the name of our Lord Jesus being glorified in you? And how are you being glorified in Him?

✓ How will God's grace work in your life this week?

Lesson by Bro Stan