

Thoughts from Second Thessalonians ...

The Revealing of Jesus



The great hope of the Christian centers about the return of the Lord Jesus. At that time he will receive the positive resurrection from the dead. But more importantly than that, he will be able truly to see the face of his Savior and King." "Beloved," the aged apostle John would write, "now we are the children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is" (1 John 3:2). Properly understood, saints will earnestly desire to see the face of Him who loved them enough to give Himself for them. So this is the hope of the Christian, eagerly to await the triumphant return of the King.

- **Jesus is coming back** — The world laughs at the concept of Jesus' returning in judgment, and mocks and ridicules those who believe in His coming back. But both Old Testament and New Testament writings affirm the return of Christ and the day of judgment. "Men will go into caves of rocks, and into holes of the ground," prophesied Isaiah, "before the terror of the Lord, and before the splendor of His majesty, when He arises to make the earth tremble" (Isaiah 2:19). Of those who persecute those who possess the name of Christ, Paul writes, "For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 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" (2 Thessalonians 1:7). It is very clear that at the *apokalupsis* — the revealing — of the Lord Jesus that the evil among men will be judged and punished. There is none of the nonsense about a "rapture," a "seven-year tribulation," and a "thousand-year reign of Christ" before this judgment begins.
- **Retribution** — When Jesus comes back to reward the saints, He will also punish evil men. He is described as "dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1:8). This retribution will be severe, what Jesus called "the outer darkness." Closing one of His parables, He spoke in very direct language. "And cast out the worthless slave in to the outer darkness," spake He. "In that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:30).

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Nothing about that sounds like a desirable eternal

vacation! Paul describes this Christless hell in these terms: "And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (2 Thessalonians 1:9). *Away from the presence of the Lord* — this is why it is described as outer darkness: because God is light, and where God is not, it is darkness. To be eternally alone, to be eternally in darkness, to be eternally in pain of these cause the mind to crumple at the thought, to "blow a fuse", so to speak. Any individual who would properly process this will believe whatever God wants him to believe and do whatever God wants him to do so that he does not end up in this awful place.

When Jesus appears in His second coming, He will bring with him the saints whose spirits and souls have resided in Paradise. As the apostle Paul described this return in his first Thessalonian epistle, he pointed out that "God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 4:14). But the scripture also pictures the angels of God as coming with Christ, as Paul avers, noting that He will "be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire." It will be an awesome and victorious day for the saints when the heavens light up like they are on fire, and those angels appear. Be ready, and eagerly awaiting!!

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