

Thoughts from Second Thessalonians ...

When Jesus Comes



There is hope, and there is empty or vain hope. God is doing mankind a huge favor by making an opportunity for them to be rescued from the folly of their own personal sins, and He is caring enough to clarify how it will all end for the fallen race. By making clear the rewards or consequences of their spiritual choices, God has effectively and helpfully closed the door to vain hope. Everyone who ends up in hell actually made the choice to be there, and everyone who obeys the gospel and is ushered into eternal glory is going to know exactly what choices they made in the believing and obeying that resulted in their justification. In spite of God's goodness and graciousness, many persist in stiffening their necks and hardening their hearts so that, even though

they are hell-bound, they refuse to look at the scriptural evidence concerning their condition. These are those who "do not know God and who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

- ▼ **The penalty** — God is very clear throughout the writings of the new covenant that anyone who does not participate in the faith of Christ is doomed. "They stumble," said Peter, "because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed" (1 Peter 2:8). "And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction," affirms Paul, "away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power when He comes ..." (2 Thessalonians 1:9,10). Some, when they read the word *destruction*, think that the individual just ceases to exist, that he somehow just evaporates in the fire. While there may be some small comfort in that thought, that is not how the overall word of God portrays the judgment upon the unbelievers. One such depiction reads thusly: "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name" (Revelation 14:11). This is a place of eternal darkness, away from the presence of Him who is light, away from the glory of His power. Deadness, aloneness, and excruciating pain afflict those who choose wrongly.

- ▼ **His glory** — Jesus is returning in "power and great glory" (Luke 21:27). "And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it," is the apostle John's disclosure, "from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them" (Revelation 20:11). Faithful brethren are usually pictured as awaiting this day with *eagerness*, for which they have been praying *Maranatha* for all their conscious Christian lives. It will be exciting for them "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" (2 Thessalonians 1:10). Jesus' earnest desire, expressed in His prayer before He crossed the Kidron to the Garden of Gethsemane, is that His disciples might see His glory. This glory must be tremendously awesome; the *marveling* that the saints will be doing must be beyond current comprehension.

None of this has happened. Jesus has not returned, nor have the sentences of judgment day been handed down. The unbeliever may tend to be skeptical, saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?" The apostle Paul mentioned to the multitudes in Athens' Areopagus that there would certainly be a day of judgment, proof of which was that God has raised Jesus from the dead. This, of course, was the testimony Paul had borne concerning Jesus when he first came to Thessalonica, and this testimony was believed by the faithful brethren in the congregation there. As certain, therefore, that Jesus is risen, so it is that He is coming in judgment, and to be marveled at by all faithful saints. Are you ready?

**JESUS IN HIS
GLORY WILL BE
MARVELED AT BY
ALL THE SAINTS**

JAY WILSON,