

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

"Fiery Revelation of Christ"

2 Thessalonians 1:5-8

March 20, 1983

INTRODUCTION

1. The witness of God commenced in Thessalonica under Paul (Acts 17:1-4). He used Scripture to preach Christ as Lord and Savior.
2. The salutation of this letter has items of commendation for the Thessalonian believers. Out front are their growing faith and abounding love (v. 3). They also exhibited great patience and faith in the midst of trouble.
3. That matter of trouble sets Paul to write about it. God is using it among the Thessalonians and also will use it against the enemies of the Gospel. Consider, then,--

1. TROUBLE AND THE BELIEVER

a. A manifested token v. 5.

"Which is" are inserted for clarity. The words refer back to "patience and faith" (v. 4). These two items are proofs of salvation and that God would yet vindicate Himself and the believers. "Patience and faith" are proofs to the Thessalonians.

b. A counted worth v. 5.

The purpose clause here cannot mean to be worthy, but to "declare worthy." This excludes human merit. God's kingdom probably refers to both the subjective and objective aspects.

c. A committed suffering v. 5, 7.

"For" signifies "on behalf of." It was therefore "in the interests of" the kingdom that they suffered. The "also" shows that their patience in suffering was augmented by current sufferings (present tense). Their loyalty to the kingdom issued in suffering (Acts 14:22). "Who are troubled" means to "press hard" or "to distress." The present passive articular participle is a vivid expression of affliction. There is a "rest" and relief from persecution. True, it is not now, but it is! Moreover, it is heartening to read "with us" for Paul and his colleagues also suffered persecution and were waiting for future deliverance.

2. TROUBLE AND THE NON-BELIEVER

a. Receives judgment of God v. 5.

The rewarding of the saints and the punishment of persecutors is an expression of God's (His holy nature) judgment.

b. Receives recompense of God v. 6.

"Seeing" comes from a phrase meaning "if so be that." There is no doubt, but a recognized fact from the Lord's standpoint ("with God") judgment is a righteous act of God's indestructible throne. "Recompense" is a double compound verb meaning to pay back, requite. Such is grounded in the righteous nature of God. Punishment is the other side of sin. "Tribulation" and "trouble" (present tense) are cognates.

c. Receives vengeance of God v. 8.

God's holiness against sin in judgment may take the form of literal fire (Gen. 3:24; Rev. 19:20; 20:14). There is no vindictiveness in God's taking (giving) vengeance. In the O.T. vengeance is the prerogative of God (Deut. 32:35), hence Jesus' deity is here taught. Two classes of people suffer: Gentiles (know not God) and Jews (obey not Gospel). This is evident as the definite article in each instance points to a class of people.

CONCLUSION

When will judgment come? The Revelation of Christ (v. 7). This occurs at the close of the tribulation period. This is the central theme of the epistle. Since the Revelation is before the millennium, it is premillennial. Are you ready? If not, believe the truth of the Gospel today.