

# The Coming Day of Vengeance Pt 1

## 2 Thessalonians 1:3–10

2 Thessalonians 1:3–10 (NKJV)

<sup>3</sup> We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, <sup>4</sup> so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, <sup>5</sup> *which is* manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; <sup>6</sup> since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, <sup>7</sup> and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, <sup>8</sup> in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>9</sup> These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, <sup>10</sup> when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

## **Introduction**

The future is always filled with surprises and unexpected events... some are good and some are bad. Some can bring tremendous joy while other can bring devastating heartbreak. While we may do all we can to prevent anything bad from happening to us in the future, ultimately we have no control over it. Only the One who rules from heaven can control the future.

The current mindset among many in the world is that if we can just get the science right and remove all the toxins and stop people from using hair spray and slow down the cow flatulences we can save the planet and have a somewhat predictable future. Trillions of dollars are being invested and the entire economic structure of the World and is rapidly moving to the Great Reset to ward off the believed destruction of the planet among other things.

Greenhouse gasses and carbon foot prints are seemingly becoming in some circles the greatest threat to us all.

But trust me whenever I say that the greatest threat to this planet has nothing to do with exhaust from the tailpipe of your car or how many coal fire plants there are or whether not you support nuclear energy. The greatest threat to the planet and the people of this planet is the coming of Christ.

It is the most important event in the future, might I add near future. It is the climax of the history of this planet. It is the event that will change everything. Believing men, women and children will be rescued from this evil sin cursed planet while the rest of those who reject the Son of God will be given over to some of the most horrendous judgments ever described in the Word of God.

The mercy and grace of God given in Jesus Christ in His first coming will change in His second coming to the justice and wrath of a furious God who has returned to judge.

But much of the world does not believe this. Many today believe that this is all there is and are placing their hopes in fallen men to rescue a fallen planet so that they can live on in their sin. There is no fear of God in their eyes and they believe that all the talk of the Christ returning is a joke.

## 2 Peter 3:3–10 (NKJV)

<sup>3</sup> knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, <sup>4</sup> and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation.” <sup>5</sup> For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, <sup>6</sup> by which the world *that* then existed perished, being flooded with water. <sup>7</sup> But the heavens and the earth *which* are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

<sup>8</sup> But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. <sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

<sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

There is global warming in the future for this planet, but it won't be by the devices and inventions of man. Nor will it have anything to do with the escalations of emissions from our industrial age.

And all of the planning and all the trillions of dollars that will be invested will not stop it.

All the solar panels, all the electric cars, all the ingenuity and genius of man will not stop this global warming.

This warming has a date on the calendar, it has a destined time to occur and there will be no escape for most in world.

It is the Day of the Lord. The Day of Christ. The Day of God.

He is coming, with fire in is eyes, a rod in His Hand and a sword from His mouth.

#### Zechariah 14:1–4 (NKJV)

Behold, the day of the Lord is coming,  
And your spoil will be divided in your midst.  
2 For I will gather all the nations to battle against  
Jerusalem;  
The city shall be taken,  
The houses rifled,

And the women ravished.  
 Half of the city shall go into captivity,  
 But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off  
 from the city.

- 3 Then the Lord will go forth  
 And fight against those nations,  
 As He fights in the day of battle.
- 4 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of  
 Olives,  
 Which faces Jerusalem on the east.  
 And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two,...

#### Zechariah 14:5–7 (NKJV)

- 5 ....Thus the Lord my God will come,  
*And* all the saints (holy ones) with You.
- 6 It shall come to pass in that day  
*That* there will be no light;  
 The lights will diminish.
- 7 It shall be one day  
 Which is known to the Lord...

#### Zechariah 14:12–13 (NKJV)

<sup>12</sup> And this shall be the plague with which the Lord  
 will strike all the people who fought against  
 Jerusalem:

Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet,  
Their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets,  
And their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths.

<sup>13</sup> It shall come to pass in that day  
*That* a great panic from the Lord will be among them.

### Revelation 6:15–17 (NKJV)

<sup>15</sup> And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, <sup>16</sup> and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! <sup>17</sup> For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

Unlike that cool evening in Bethlehem nearly 2000 years ago, when the cry of the new born Son of God pierced thru the night, His return will not be so isolated, and so humble.

The grass of the stable will be turned into flames and the dark starlit night will blaze with the Glory of God. The herald angels of the new born

king will be turned to trumpet blast of judgements on the ungodly.

Every injustice will be judged. Every idle word will be made known. Every evil thought will be exposed. Every murder of the innocent child will be punished. Every evil plot of sinful men will be brought down.

No one will escape and No one can hide.

## I. The Reality of His Return.

1. from heaven
2. with this mighty angels
3. in flaming fire.

## II. The Reasons for His Return

1. Retribution
2. Rest

## **I. The Reality of His Return.**

The central theme of this passage is the revelation of Jesus Christ in His second coming.

There are 3 prepositional phrases that describe is coming.

All in verse 7-8



He is coming

1. from heaven
2. with this mighty angels
3. in flaming fire.

## 1. from heaven

v7. Lord Jesus is revealed **from heaven**

There are 3 words that are most commonly used in reference to the the Second Coming of Christ.

1. ἔρχομαι
2. ἀποκάλυψις
- 3 .παρουσία

1. **ἔρχομαι** to move toward or up to the reference point of the viewpoint character or event—‘to come, coming.’

Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). [Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 192). New York: United Bible Societies.

2. **ἀποκάλυψις** to cause something to be fully known—‘to reveal, to disclose, to make fully known, revelation.’

Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). [Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 338). New York: United Bible Societies.

3 **.παρουσία** to come to be present at a particular place—‘to come, to arrive, to come to be present.’

Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). [Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, pp. 192–193). New York: United Bible Societies.

Not used in this passage but just a couple of verses later it is used.

## **2 Thessalonians 2:1** (NKJV)

**2** Now, brethren, concerning the **coming** of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,

When we are discussing Jesus coming from Heaven, We are talking about **έρχομαι**  
He physically leaves heaven and comes to earth.

## **2 Thessalonians 1:10** (NKJV)

**10 when He comes**, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

The first time He came He came in the womb of His mother Mary. He grew into a young boy, then a young man and eventually a grown man. But this time when he comes he will come as the king of kings and Lord of lords. He will physically leave the throne of heaven and return to the earth.

This is important to understand, that although we believe and know that the Bible teaches the Jesus Christ is God and that being God He is omnipresent, but this coming is not referring to His spiritual

presence, and that it is just unique here at this event.

NO, we are talking about Him physically rising from His throne in heaven and leaving the physical location of Heaven and descending down to the earth. He will physically appear in the sky with the clouds. He is physically seated in Heaven as we speak, but one day very soon, He will leave to come here.

Just like we believe it is essential to believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ, we also believe it to be important that you believe in the physical bodily return of Christ in the sky.

### **Acts 1:9–11 (NKJV)**

<sup>9</sup> Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. <sup>10</sup> And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, <sup>11</sup> who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, w\_.”

### **Matthew 24:30 (NKJV)**

<sup>30</sup> **Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will**

mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

1 Thessalonians 1:9–10 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> .... you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, <sup>10</sup> and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. ...

Revelation 1:7 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him....

## I. The Reality of His Return.

1. from heaven
2. with this mighty angels

**2 Thessalonians 1:7 (NKJV)**

<sup>7</sup> and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,

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μετ αγγελων δυναμεως αυτου  
with angels of His power.

These are powerful angels, mighty angels, but they are only what they are because of His power. The strength and power and mighty presence comes from God.

the point of the present verse is that they are the executors of the Lord's judicial power

Green, G. L. (2002). [The letters to the Thessalonians](#) (p. 289). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos.

This is how Jesus reveals himself...with His Angels.

Matthew 13:39 (NKJV)

<sup>39</sup> The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.

Matthew 13:41 (NKJV)

<sup>41</sup> The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness,

Matthew 16:27 (NKJV)

27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

Matthew 25:31 (NKJV)

31 “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.

Matthew 24:31 (NKJV)

31 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

This is common for God to show up with Angels.

Angels often appeared with God in the Old Testament. In a probable reference to the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai, Moses declared

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2002). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (p. 234). Chicago: Moody Press.

Deuteronomy 33:2 (NKJV)

2 And he said:

“The Lord came from Sinai,  
...And He came with ten thousands of saints;

...

## Psalm 68:17 (NKJV)

17 The chariots of God *are* twenty thousand,  
*Even* thousands of thousands;  
 The Lord is among them *as in* Sinai, in the Holy  
*Place*.

This revealing is the second word that is used in this text about the coming of Christ is the word,

3. **ἀποκάλυψις** to cause something to be fully known—‘to reveal, to disclose, to make fully known, revelation.’

The term means “the removal of the veil” and is frequently employed in those contexts where the biblical author wishes to talk of some kind of divine “revelation,” such as the unveiling of truths previously hidden

Green, G. L. (2002). [The letters to the Thessalonians](#) (p. 288). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos.

This is the unveiling of Christ to the World.... specifically the world of unbelievers...The God whom they have rejected and defied and denied. The God whom they say does not exist will show up

in the sky. The Christ whom they mock and blaspheme. The Christ whom they say is only a good moral teacher is the one who will show up in power and glory in the clouds.

The same word would be used for the unveiling of a sculpture. The statue has been present all along, but under its cover no one noticed its glory and splendor. Likewise, Christ is reigning now from heaven for his church (Eph. 1:21). The problem is that the world rejects this truth and that Christ's own people often forget it. But like the statue that is revealed to sight when its covering is removed, at Christ's return his sovereign majesty will be displayed before all the world, the godly and ungodly alike. J. Philip Arthur writes:

The unbelieving world has mocked the hope of Christians for years. Why put your trust in someone when you have no guarantee that he is even there? Believers for their part have had to live with the frustration that, though convinced of the reality of Jesus, they have not been able to silence the cynics. But scoffers will find that every taunt will die on their lips when the one who has been concealed stands revealed in all his splendor.



Phillips, R. D. (2015). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#). (R. D. Phillips, P. G. Ryken, & D. M. Doriani, Eds.) (p. 288). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.

This is the unveiling, the revealing.

1 Corinthians 1:7 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

1 Peter 1:7 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

1 Peter 1:13 (NKJV)

<sup>13</sup> Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

Luke 17:26–30 (NKJV)

<sup>26</sup> **And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: <sup>27</sup> They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.**

<sup>28</sup> Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; <sup>29</sup> but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed *them* all. <sup>30</sup> Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

Some take this to be a spiritual and invisible revealing or appearance of Christ in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD, but

This word in its verb form like Luke 17:30 is used in 2 Thessalonians 2:3,6,8 to refer to the man of sin being revealed.

## 2 Thessalonians 2:3 (NKJV)

<sup>3</sup> Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is **revealed**, the son of perdition,

2 Thessalonians 2:6 (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup> And now you know what is restraining, that he may be **revealed** in his own time.

2 Thessalonians 2:8 (NKJV)

<sup>8</sup> And then the lawless one will be **revealed**, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

It is important to note that in every occasion where this word **ἀποκάλυψις** is used in noun form and verb form in regards to the coming of the man of sin and coming and the appearance of Jesus Christ, it is

understood as a physical, bodily appearance... not a metaphorical or spiritual appearance or presence

This word is different from the word **παρουσία** which means the arrival of someone, or the presence of someone. This is the arrival of someone you expect.

The **ἀποκάλυψις** is the coming and unveiling of someone unknown.

to the World, this is the unveiling of God,  
The veil is pulled back, the unseen is not seen, The invisible God is made visible to the world.

Revelation 1:7 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> Behold, He is coming with clouds, **and every eye will see Him**, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

Zechariah 12:10 (NKJV)

<sup>10</sup> “And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then **they will look on Me** whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

### Matthew 24:30 (NKJV)

<sup>30</sup> Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and **they will see the Son of Man** coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

### Luke 21:25–27 (NKJV)

<sup>25</sup> “And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring;  
<sup>26</sup> men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.  
<sup>27</sup> **Then they will see the Son of Man** coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

### Revelation 6:12–7:1 (NKJV)

<sup>12</sup> I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. <sup>13</sup> And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. <sup>14</sup> Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. <sup>15</sup> And the kings of

the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, <sup>16</sup> and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and **hide us from the face of Him** who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! <sup>17</sup> For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

1. Every eye will see him
2. they will look on him
3. They will see the Son of Man
4. they say, “hide us from the face of Him”

This is not a spiritual or metaphorical appearance of Christ.

This is the real Christ, the physical, resurrected body of Christ appearing over the sky, revealing to the world the God of Heaven, the Creator and Sovereign Judge of the Universe.

- I. The Reality of His Return.
  1. from heaven

2. with this mighty angels
3. in flaming fire.

**7** and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,

**8** **in flaming fire** taking vengeance

Exodus 3:2 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush *was* not consumed.

Exodus 19:16–22 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup> Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who *were* in the camp trembled. <sup>17</sup> And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. <sup>18</sup> Now Mount Sinai *was* completely in smoke, because the Lord

descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. <sup>19</sup> And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice. <sup>20</sup> Then the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

<sup>21</sup> And the Lord said to Moses, “Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to gaze at the Lord, and many of them perish. <sup>22</sup> Also let the priests who come near the Lord consecrate themselves, lest the Lord break out against them.”

Deuteronomy 5:4 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> The Lord talked with you face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire.

Deuteronomy 18:16 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup> according to all you desired of the Lord your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.’

Deuteronomy 4:24 (NKJV)

<sup>24</sup> For the Lord your God *is* a consuming fire, a jealous God.

Hebrews 12:29 (NKJV)

<sup>29</sup> For our God *is* a consuming fire.

Daniel 7:9–10 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> “I watched till thrones were put in place,  
And the Ancient of Days was seated;  
His garment *was* white as snow,  
And the hair of His head *was* like pure wool.  
His throne *was* a fiery flame,  
Its wheels a burning fire;

<sup>10</sup> A fiery stream issued  
And came forth from before Him.  
A thousand thousands ministered to Him;  
Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before  
Him...

What is this fire, is it just physical fire. It is clearly on many occasions a physical fire as in Mt. Sinai But is more than this. It is a display of His Holy Judgement, represent by the all consuming, nature of fire....

Deuteronomy 9:3 (NKJV)



<sup>3</sup> Therefore understand today that the Lord your God *is* He who goes over before you *as* a consuming fire. He will destroy them and bring them down before you; so you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly, as the Lord has said to you.

notice it says,

**7** Jesus is revealed from heaven

**8** **in flaming fire** taking vengeance

not with flaming fire.

Although he will use fire to judge, the emphasis here is the character of the one Judging.

His judgment is a fire..

He is a fire. A consuming fire.

**Isaiah 66:16** (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup> For by fire and by His sword  
The Lord will judge all flesh;  
And the slain of the Lord shall be many.

**Psalms 21:8–9** (NKJV)

<sup>8</sup> Your hand will find all Your enemies;  
Your right hand will find those who hate You.

9 You shall make them as a fiery oven in the time of  
Your anger;  
The Lord shall swallow them up in His wrath,  
And the fire shall devour them.

7 Jesus is revealed from heaven

8 in flaming fire taking vengeance

Jesus is revealed to the world from heaven with an  
all consuming judgment that will bring  
vengeance.

taking didómi: to give (in various senses lit. or  
fig.)

**Original Word:** δίδωμι

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** didómi

**Phonetic Spelling:** (did'-o-mee)

**Definition:** to give

**Usage:** I offer, give; I put, place

**ekdikésis: vengeance, vindication**

**Original Word:** ἐκδίκησις, εως, ἡ

**Part of Speech:** Noun, Feminine

**Transliteration:** ekdikésis

**Phonetic Spelling:** (ek-dik'-ay-sis)

**Definition:** vengeance, vindication

**Usage:** (a) a defense, avenging, vindication, vengeance, (b) full (complete) punishment.

1557 ekdíkēsis (a feminine noun derived from 1537 / ek, "out from and to" and 1349 /díkē, "justice, judge") – properly, judgment which fully executes the core-values (standards) of the particular judge, i.e. extending from the inner-person of the judge to its out-come (outcome).

*Ekdikēsis* (**retribution**), meaning “to give full punishment,” is variously translated “justice,” “punishment,” “retribution,” “vengeance,” and “avenging of wrong.”

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2002). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (p. 236). Chicago: Moody Press.

Romans 12:19 (NKJV)

<sup>19</sup> Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, “*Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,*” says the Lord.

Hebrews 10:29–31 (NKJV)

<sup>29</sup> Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant

by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? <sup>30</sup> For we know Him who said, “*Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,*” says the Lord. And again, “*The Lord will judge His people.*” <sup>31</sup> It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

God’s **retribution**, however, is not like the unruly, hostile, selfish, sinful passion that causes people to retaliate against others, since “the God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous” (Rom. 3:5). But because sinful humans are not perfectly holy, completely just, and omniscient, they cannot render perfect judgment. Therefore, God reserves vengeance for Himself. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus forbade personal vengeance

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2002). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (p. 236). Chicago: Moody Press.

Matthew 5:38–48 (NKJV)

<sup>38</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘*An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.*’ <sup>39</sup> But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. <sup>40</sup> If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have *your* cloak also. <sup>41</sup> And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. <sup>42</sup> Give to him who

asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

<sup>43</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘*You shall love your neighbor* and hate your enemy.’ <sup>44</sup> But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, <sup>45</sup> that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. <sup>46</sup> For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup> And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more *than others*? Do not even the tax collectors do so? <sup>48</sup> Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Romans 12:18–21 (NKJV)

<sup>18</sup> If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. <sup>19</sup> Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, “*Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,*” says the Lord. <sup>20</sup> Therefore

*“If your enemy is hungry, feed him;  
If he is thirsty, give him a drink;  
For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his  
head.”*

<sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

The Bible repeatedly teaches that God will deal out retribution to sinners. The imprecatory Psalms (7; 35; 40; 55; 58; 59; 69; 79; 109; 137; 139; 144) presuppose and even exalt God’s retribution. In strong, even shocking language, the psalmists cry out for God to take vengeance on their enemies:

The righteous will rejoice when he sees the  
vengeance;  
He will wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.  
(Ps. 58:10)

Surely God will shatter the head of His enemies,  
The hairy crown of him who goes on in his guilty  
deeds. (Ps. 68:21)

Add iniquity to their iniquity,  
And may they not come into Your righteousness.  
(Ps. 69:27)

And return to our neighbors sevenfold into their  
bosom

The reproach with which they have reproached  
You, O Lord. (Ps. 79:12)

Let there be none to extend lovingkindness to him,  
Nor any to be gracious to his fatherless children.  
(Ps. 109:12)

How blessed will be the one who seizes and  
dashes your little ones  
Against the rock. (Ps. 137:9)

Do I not hate those who hate You, O Lord?  
And do I not loathe those who rise up against  
You?

I hate them with the utmost hatred;  
They have become my enemies. (Ps. 139:21–22)

Such forceful calls for God's just vengeance on His  
enemies disturb some, as John Wenham notes:

Earlier this year [1962] 14 church study groups in  
Woodford looked at the Old Testament psalms and  
concluded that 84 of them were “not fit for  
Christians to sing”; and J. C. Wansey, compiler of  
the useful collection of New Testament passages  
which have been printed for congregational  
chanting under the title *A New Testament Psalter*,  
commented: “These psalms and parts of many

others are full of tribal jealousies, bloodthirsty threats and curses, whinings and moanings, which are shocking in themselves and time-wasting to God and man. The New Testament psalms are Christian through and through.” But to jettison half the Psalter is a dubious expedient, for, as C. S. Lewis realizes, the harsh passages and the tender passages are hopelessly mixed up, and it is not possible just to ignore the unpleasant sections. (*The Goodness of God* [Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity, 1975], 149)

But imprecatory language is not restricted to the Psalms. Warned by God that the men of his hometown sought his life (Jer. 11:18, 21), Jeremiah prayed, “O Lord of hosts, who judges righteously, who tries the feelings and the heart, let me see Your vengeance on them, for to You have I committed my cause” (11:20). In response, God promised, “Behold, I am about to punish them! The young men will die by the sword, their sons and daughters will die by famine; and a remnant will not be left to them, for I will bring disaster on the men of Anathoth—the year of their punishment” (Jer. 11:22–23).

Later, in an even more forcefully worded prayer, Jeremiah cried out,



Do give heed to me, O Lord, and listen to what my opponents are saying! Should good be repaid with evil? For they have dug a pit for me. Remember how I stood before You to speak good on their behalf, so as to turn away Your wrath from them. Therefore, give their children over to famine and deliver them up to the power of the sword; and let their wives become childless and widowed. Let their men also be smitten to death, their young men struck down by the sword in battle. May an outcry be heard from their houses, when You suddenly bring raiders upon them; for they have dug a pit to capture me and hidden snares for my feet. Yet You, O Lord, know all their deadly designs against me; do not forgive their iniquity or blot out their sin from Your sight. But may they be overthrown before You; deal with them in the time of Your anger! (Jer. 18:19–23)

In Jeremiah 19:3–9 God answered the prophet's prayer:

Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, "Behold I am about to bring a calamity upon this place, at which the ears of everyone that hears of it will tingle. Because they have forsaken Me and have made this an alien place and have burned sacrifices in it to other gods, that neither they nor

their forefathers nor the kings of Judah had ever known, and because they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, a thing which I never commanded or spoke of, nor did it ever enter My mind; therefore, behold, days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when this place will no longer be called Topheth or the valley of Ben-hinnom, but rather the valley of Slaughter. I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place, and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies and by the hand of those who seek their life; and I will give over their carcasses as food for the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth. I will also make this city a desolation and an object of hissing; everyone who passes by it will be astonished and hiss because of all its disasters. I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they will eat one another’s flesh in the siege and in the distress with which their enemies and those who seek their life will distress them.”

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2002). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (pp. 236–238). Chicago: Moody Press.

Some, hearkening back to liberal theology’s false dichotomy between the supposedly harsh, cruel God of the Old Testament and the gentle,

meeK, loving Jesus of the New Testament, might be tempted to reject such strongly worded language as uncharacteristic of Jesus. But Jesus and the New Testament writers used equally strong language.

Paul wrote to Timothy, “Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds” (2 Tim. 4:14), while in

Revelation 6:10 the Tribulation martyrs cry out, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

In Matthew 3:12 John the Baptist said of Jesus, “His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” In contrast to a popular evangelical cliché, Jesus has a horrible plan for the lives of those who reject Him

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2002). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (pp. 238–239). Chicago: Moody Press.

This vengeance is reserved for those who reject Christ. Those who die in unbelief and unrepentant.

**8** in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the

gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power

\_\_\_ There is no greater sorrow that can be experienced and no greater pain to be endured than to be separate from for all Eternity.

## 2 Peter 3:10–15 (NKJV)

<sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. <sup>11</sup> Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, <sup>12</sup> looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

<sup>14</sup> Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; <sup>15</sup> and consider *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation—as also our

beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,