



# 2 Thessalonians

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**...and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 2 Thessalonians 1:7**

Paul has just noted the repayment by God with tribulation of those who troubled the believers. As the epistle is written for the entire church age, it is a time which lies ahead, and in which the world will be judged for its treatment of believers. This becomes more evident as the words of this verse continue to unfold. He now states believers will obtain the opposite of the "tribulation" the world will receive by saying, "and to give you who are troubled rest."

The word "rest" here is only used five times in Scripture, once in Acts, and four times by Paul. It gives the sense of relief or freedom. It is a type of rest that occurs when one lets loose something tense. A person who has held a bow and arrow until the strain builds up is given this type of relaxing ease when he lets go of the arrow. This is what will be given to those who face the stress of the world which comes against faithful Christians. Paul then says this will occur "with us." He is speaking specifically of himself, Silvanus, and Timothy.

His words give the sense of the gathering together of all believers. Those who first suffered tribulations, and those then who saw their trials and were willing to also endure what they saw by receiving Christ, will together be given relief from those who troubled them. And all of this is set to occur "when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven." The Greek literally reads, "at the apocalypse of the Lord Jesus."

It is a different term than is normally used of the advent of Christ, *parousia*. That denotes "presence." On the other hand, the word "apocalypse" gives a more striking concept of the appearance or manifestation of Christ. It is a period where Christ will be revealed as the One, Supreme, and All-powerful Ruler of the world. Thus, this appearance here is speaking of something different than the rapture itself, which he already described in 1 Thessalonians 4. However, Paul uses the name "Jesus" to help the believers identify more closely with His human nature. Despite what is coming, we have a Lord who first personally suffered for His

people. When His people now suffer, He can empathize with them, and He will then be faithful to fully repay those who have persecuted His beloved church. It will be a time when He “is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels.”

Again, the term in Greek more literally says, “with the angels of His power.” These are angels which serve the Lord, and which exercise His great power for His sovereign purposes. They are given His commands, and they execute His judgments according to His words. Jesus speaks of them in Matthew. Jude speaks of them as well. And in the book of Revelation, we are given exacting insights into what they will accomplish at the Lord’s direction.

Life application: As the world continues to tailspin into more and more perversion, God’s people can expect to be faced with more and more persecution. But the Lord is not uncaring about this. Just the opposite is true. His plans and purposes are being fulfilled, even through our times of trouble. But He will also faithfully execute judgment on those who persecute His people. Don’t think the Lord has abandoned you; He has not.

**...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. 2 Thessalonians 1:8**

The “flaming fire” here belongs to the angels, not to the judgment of the angels. Thus, there should be a comma after fire instead of before it. In the Old Testament, angels are known as *seraphim*, or “burning ones.” Much of the tribulation judgment does not come in the form of fire. Thus, there would otherwise be an inconsistency in the text. These powerful angels display a burning aura around them. Their judgments will be poured out on the world according to the descriptions found in the book of Revelation.

They will be, as it says, “taking vengeance.” However, the word “taking” is not appropriate. It implies personal vindictiveness, a characteristic not found in the true God. The Greek reads “giving” or “rendering.” God is not punishing because of a personal grudge against offenders. Instead, he is assigning to the unrepentant world their just due, and each man will receive that just due for not ascribing to God what is appropriate, and for just repayment of those who troubled His people.

It is for this reason that vengeance will come, and it will come upon “those who do not know God.” Jesus stated that if one sees Him, they have seen the Father. It is He who reveals God to us in a manner which we can understand, and it is He who mediates between God and man. Those who reject Jesus do not ascribe to God what is appropriate, and they, in turn, are those who then trouble His people. Otherwise, they would be His people. But they are, instead, at odds with God; enemies of Jesus. This is explicitly stated in the words, “and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

By the words here then, we have two different categories:

- 1) Those who do not know God.
- 2) Those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Though the two go hand in hand, they are listed separately because there are different types of knowledge in Paul's mind. There are those who "know" God (even that Jesus is God), but they then do not acknowledge Him. And there are those who don't "know" God, because they don't know who Jesus is. This then follows through with the next clause. The first category may "know" God because they know who Jesus is, but they do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. They reject the truth of Christ, and thus they reject God. The two categories are necessarily stated separately to show that all will be punished because of failing to meet one or the other category.

The words "of our Lord Jesus Christ" are specifically used here to define those who may know the gospel, but who still reject the work of Jesus as the Messiah. In other words, this includes Jews of the end times who will be destroyed, even to two thirds of the nation (Zechariah 13:8). With God, there is no partiality, and both Jew and Gentile are favored only because of their standing with Christ Jesus. No other distinction will save them. Destruction lies ahead for all who fail to come to Christ.

Life application: If you have failed to come to Christ through the gospel of Christ (and this includes all who attempt to be justified by works of the law), you will be left behind at the rapture, and you will endure the judgments of the tribulation period. Now would be a good time for you to leave the Hebrew Roots movement, the SDAs, or any other group who mandates observance of the law, in part or in whole. Call on Christ, trust in Christ, rest in Christ.