

WRATH & WONDER

Tuesday, November 4

Reading: 2 Thessalonians 1:7-12

2 Thessalonians 1:9 *They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might* **10** *on the day He comes to be glorified in His holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed.*

Jesus' Second Coming will be nothing like His first coming. His first coming was to rescue; His second coming will be to war. The first time He was born as a helpless baby to grow up and die for the sins of the world. Next time He will come as King of Kings to judge and reign. These verses describe God's just wrath on unbelievers as well as the wonder of the saints.

WRATH ON THE WICKED (1:7-10) – Paul lists three charges for which people will be judged. (1) They Troubled God's People. To attack God's people is to attack God Himself. (2) They Do Not Know God. There is no excuse for this since creation reveals the existence and power of God (Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:18-25). They simply refuse to accept it. (3) They Do Not Obey the Gospel. Rejection of Christ's gift of salvation is the only unforgiveable sin (see John 3:18-19).

Paul describes their punishment as “everlasting destruction.” Some have taken this to mean that the souls of the wicked will be annihilated – they will cease to exist. But if punishment ends, how is it eternal? The description of being “shut out from the presence of the Lord” contrasts Paul's earlier statement that the saved will “be with the Lord forever” (1 Thess. 4:17). If the punishment of the wicked has an ending point, does the joy of the redeemed have an end as well? Of course not!

The Greek word used carries the idea of corruption or ruin. Sinful humanity has always wanted a life without God. Now they will get their wish. God created Hell or the Lake of Fire as punishment for Satan and His angels (Matthew 25:41). Thus, God is the One in control of it. The sad truth of Hell is that only the judgment and wrath of God will be present there. There will be no trace of mercy, grace, or love. Those who go there rejected all these when they refused to follow God and accept Christ's sacrifice for their sin.

WONDER OF THE SAINTS (1:10-12) – God's children have a different future in store. When Christ returns in glory, He will “be glorified in His holy people.” Believers today glorify God through their lives and good works (Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 10:31). However, we do so imperfectly. But on that Day, we will be glorified by Christ and stand with Him in perfect holiness (see Philippians 3:21; Romans 8:18-21).

Because they were children of God, Paul prays that they would show God's glory in their daily lives. Believers are to live today in light of our wonderful destiny. Believers should show we are God's children through our lives and actions. Everything we do should be for the glory of Jesus Christ. But remember all this can only be accomplished through God's power and grace working in us. Meditate on the following verse today:

“Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as he is. All who have this hope in Him purify themselves, just as He is pure” (1 John 3:2-3)