

A Day of Vindication and Vengeance | 2 Thessalonians 1:5-12

This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering – since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hardship Produces Character

1. "Evidence" of faith and steadfastness: enduring persecution
 - a. "...no one be moved by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this." (1 Thessalonians 3:3)
 - b. "...if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister." (Colossians 1:23)
 - c. "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed." (1 Peter 4:12-13)

2. Persecution, hardship, or suffering produces character:
 - a. Longing for Christ's return
 - b. Longings for the things of this world die

Hell Affirms Hearts

- a. "But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled, my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked....until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end....My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." (Psalm 73:2-3,17, &26)
1. All Know God
 - i. People go to hell not because they don't know God, but because they love their sin.
 1. "For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things." (Romans 1:19-23)
 2. The presence of God and the absence of His grace

Holiness Through Prayer

1. God's grace in our worth
2. God's grace in our fruit
3. God's grace in shared glory

Benediction | Psalm 73:26

"My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."