

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

When Does God Provide His Justice?

II Thessalonians 1:6-12

1 Why is it that when bad things happen to good people, God just sits there and lets it happen? Someone cheats or lies to you. Someone steals, hurts or takes advantage of your vulnerability. Why doesn't the God of justice step in and immediately zap the offender? Where is God when the innocent are persecuted?

God created us with free will and honors the choices we make; good or bad. That's a part of being created in God's image and likeness!

The bad choices produce consequences that are not fair. Adam and Eve's sin and its consequences even affect us today. Some even believe nature and weather are affected by accumulated human sin.

God has chosen to postpone His judgment. So, for now, life is unfair. Our scripture for today; Second Thessalonians, chapter 1, verses 6 through 12, explains this. 2

God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.¹ ₃

They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you because you believed our testimony to you.² ₄

With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in

¹ II Thessalonians 1:6-8.

² II Thessalonians 1:9-10.

you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³ ₅

Even though life is unfair, God has given us this promise, **And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.** ⁴

God's ultimate results for you will be good and just. ₆

The time will come when . . .

I. The Lord Will Judge the Unjust - v6-9

The Lord will judge the unjust. ₇

Who are the unjust? ₈

Verse 6 says they are **those who have persecuted God's children. God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you** . . . ₉

³ II Thessalonians 1:11-12.

⁴ Romans 8:28.

The Lord commanded you not to seek revenge yourself. ⁵ But notice why! ¹⁰ Romans, chapter 12, verse 19, **Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay,"** says the Lord. ¹¹

Verse 8 says they are **those who do not know God**. These verses are a bit hard for me to take personally. But verse 8 says, **He will punish those who do not know God . . .** ¹²

Maybe this means those who have never been introduced to the gospel. Romans, chapter 2, verses 14 and 15 read, **Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.** ¹³

⁵ Matthew 5:38-39 - "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

Maybe this means those who have refused to recognize God like the atheists who deny God's existence in spite of the evidence! ¹⁴

Verse 8 continues to say they are those who do not obey the gospel; . . . and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ¹⁵ These are those who know God but choose not to obey Him. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ⁶ ¹⁶

How do you obey the gospel? ¹⁷

You cannot obey a fact. But you can obey the likeness of a fact. The gospel is the story of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. That is the fact! ¹⁸

You identify with that gospel fact when you are baptized by symbolically dying to your old life, burying the corpse to rising in a new life! ¹⁹ Obey, here, means not only submitting to Him in baptism but

⁶ Romans 1:21.

also recognizing His authority as Lord in your life afterwards! ²⁰

What will happen? ²¹

The Lord and His angels will come. Verse 7, **This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.** ²² Remember First Thessalonians, chapter 4, verse 16, **For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.** ²³

Then, **He will take revenge with flaming fire!** Verses 6 and 7, **He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful**

angels. ²⁴ Everything will melt from the fire. ⁷ ²⁵
Everything will be burned up! ²⁶

Then, verse 9. **They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power . . .** The result will be the unbeliever will be eternally destroyed! ²⁷

Destroy ⁸ in the original language means literally “to destroy”. ²⁸ But, here, it could mean “separate” from the Lord’s presence and majesty. ²⁹ Whatever this implies, it will be forever! ³⁰

The Lord will not only judge the unjust . . .

II. The Lord Will Exalt the Just - v10-12

The Lord will exalt the just. ³¹

Who are the just? ³² They are **His holy people**, verse 10, . . . **on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who**

⁷ II Peter 3:10 - But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

⁸ ὄλεθρος.

have believed. This includes you because you believed our testimony to you.

Holy⁹ people are saints, the sacred, the dedicated, the pure; those who have been separated apart for God!³³ Now add verse 12 to this to find out who these holy people are. **We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him.** These holy people are you!³⁴ These people are those who believe the apostle's testimony, the word of God.³⁵

What will happen?³⁶

What will happen to the Lord? Verse 10. . . . on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed.³⁷ He will be glorified,¹⁰ which means honored, given high esteem, in His holy people - you!³⁸

⁹ ἅγιος.

¹⁰ ἐνδοξάζομαι.

Verse 10 also says He will **be marveled at** by all those who believe. **Marveled at** ¹¹ is the word for “amazed” or “astonished”. ³⁹

What will happen to His disciples? ⁴⁰ Verse 7 says they will have relief; ¹² rest. ⁴¹ Verse 11 says, **With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling . . . His calling is the **CROSS**.** ⁴²

Verse 11 continues to say that He will fulfill all of your good purposes which were prompted by your faith. ¹³

⁴³

Verse 12 finishes this scripture saying that the disciples, you, will be glorified by the Lord’s grace. **We pray this 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.**

God will provide His divine justice in His own time. ⁴⁴

¹¹ θαυμάζω.

¹² ἄνεσις.

¹³ II Thessalonians 1:11 - . . . that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith.

God is going to make everything right; but it may not happen until He comes again!

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