

The Fire Next Time

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I. Introduction. Text: II Thessalonians 1:1-12.

II. The Apostle repeats “God our Father” and the “Lord Jesus Christ” to remind the believers of their source of strength during difficult times.

III. Paul says they were bound to praise them.

A. This was based on fact.

B. Faith was growing, and love was increasing.

IV. Paul does not mention their hope indicating the problem they have concerning their wavering about the Coming of the Lord. If you do not have hope, it will undermine your faith and labor of love.

V. The Thessalonians endurance under great pressure was evidence that God was at work among them strengthening them.

A. God is using their suffering to prepare them for the kingdom reign that they will shortly have with Him revealing to them that they are worthy of the kingdom of God by faith in Christ.

B. God is using their suffering to reveal the condemnation of the world. (Hebrews 11)

C. God would even the score at last and bring relief to the people of God.

VI. The *parousia*.

A. The Lord meets the people in the air.

B. He does not return to heaven, but He remains on earth and directs its affairs during the Great Tribulation invisible to the eye.

C. After the Tribulation He will unveil Himself in open glory. (Revelation 1:7)

D. Two results. (Matthew 25)

1. The judgment of the rebels.

a. Those who have never heard and those who did not obey the gospel will be judged.

b. Those who do not know Jesus will be justly judged because of their rejection of His revelation in nature. (Romans 1:19-20)

c. Those who have heard and rejected the gospel shall suffer eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His might.

- d. Hell is loneliness and emptiness. There is never the bliss of annihilation.
- e. Justice is being carried out--this is His righteous reaction to cosmic treason, and it is self-chosen.

2. The presentation of the believers in glory.

- a. The basis that we are delivered is our belief that another has died in our place.
- b. The saints reflecting the glory of Jesus causes the world to marvel.
- c. There is a glory and joy that only the redeemed know.

VI. The Lord Jesus is being glorified now when a believer holds steady.

Application questions:

1. How can suffering be seen as a positive sign?

2. What does the future rapture of the church tell us about God's position towards the church now?

3. Will those who have never had any information about Jesus be condemned? Explain your answer.
