

An aerial photograph of a busy crosswalk with white stripes on a dark asphalt surface. Several pedestrians are walking across the crosswalk, and their long shadows are cast across the stripes. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

LAST DAYS LIVING

A STUDY IN I & II THESSALONIANS

“A Primer on God’s Final Justice”

II THESSALONIANS 1:6-10

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday
and today and forever.*

Hebrews 13:8

- a. God is ready to judge the living and the dead (I Pet 4:5).
- b. God is the righteous Judge who gives crowns (II Tim 4:8).
- c. Jesus has been designated by the Father to judge (Acts 10:42).
- d. There are appointed times for judging (Acts 17:31).
- e. God will bring everything to light for judgment (Ecc 11:9; 12:14).
- f. God sits as eternal Judge over His universe (Ps 9:4-8).

Judgment from Heaven

“The thing that would be morally doubtful would be for him not to show his wrath in this way. God is not *just* – that is, he does not act in a way that is *right*, he does not do what is proper to a *judge* – unless he inflicts upon all sin and wrongdoing the penalty it deserves.”



James Packer

KEY POINT:

**God will judge those who afflict His people,
and this judgment will be everlasting.**

1. Who does God judge?

2. When will God judge?

3. How will God judge?

4. Why does God judge?

4 Questions in Our Text

1. Who does God judge? (vs. 6-7a)

4 Questions in Our Text

1. can mean “to give back as an equivalent” or “to pay back again”
2. can be used to refer to something favorable (I Thes 3:9)
3. can be used to refer to something unfavorable
4. God’s way of balancing the scales of justice
5. the principle of *lex talionis*, which means in the Latin “law of retaliation”

The Word “*Repay*”

¹ After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out,

“Hallelujah!

Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,

² for his judgments are true and just;

for he has judged the great prostitute

who corrupted the earth with her immorality,

and has avenged on her the blood of his servants.”

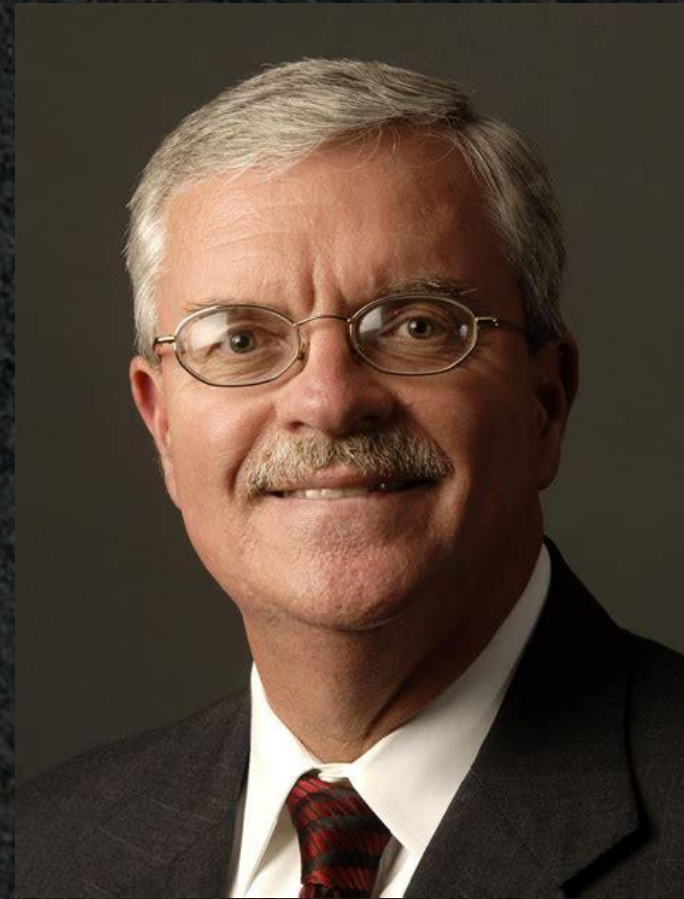
Revelation 19:1-2

1. can mean “loosening” or “relaxing”
2. God bringing peace to the oppressed

The Words “*Grant Relief*”

“We could liken Christ’s return to a rescue team storming a school building to subdue terrorists and free their hostages.

To the terrorists the coming of the team means punishment, but to the captives their coming means relief and deliverance.”



Robert Peterson

*13 Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do,
that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
14 If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.*

John 14:13-14

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2. When will God judge?

4 Questions in Our Text

*⁴ On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward. ⁵ And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and **all the holy ones** with him.*

Zechariah 14:4-5

*Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will **send His angels**, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Matthew 13:40-42

*When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and **all the angels with him**, then he will sit on his glorious throne.”*

Matthew 25:31

*Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven,
holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit
and a great chain.*

Revelation 20:1

1. Who does God judge?

2. When will God judge?

3. How will God judge?

4 Questions in Our Text

*¹⁵ “For behold, the LORD will come in fire,
and his chariots like the whirlwind,
to render his anger in fury,
and his rebuke with flames of fire.*

*¹⁶ For by fire will the LORD enter into judgment,
and by his sword, with all flesh;
and those slain by the LORD shall be many.*

Isaiah 66:15-16

- The burning bush in Exodus 3
- The fire surrounding the mountain in Exodus 19 and 24
- Called a blazing oven in Psalm 21
and devouring fire in Psalm 50
- The fiery furnace in Daniel 7
- Burning the chaff in judgment in Matthew 3 and 13
- Consuming fire in Hebrews 10 and 12
- Fire of judgment that destroys the heavens and earth in II Peter 3

Examples of “God on Fire”

1. The view that non-Christians will not experience eternal punishment in hell but be destroyed or annihilated at some point
2. Key word “destruction” (I Cor 5:5; I Thess 5:3; II Thess 1:9; I Tim 6:9)

What Is Annihilation?

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Daniel 12:2

*And these will go away into eternal punishment,
but the righteous into eternal life.”*

Matthew 25:46

*And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin,
cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to
enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or
two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire.*

Matthew 18:8

*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life;
whoever does not obey the Son shall not see
life, but the wrath of God remains on him.*

John 3:36

just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

Jude 7

*wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of
their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the
gloom of utter darkness has been reserved
forever.*

Jude 13

1. Used 72x in the N.T.

2. 3x NOT translated as “forever” (Rom 16:25; II Tim 1:9; Tit 1:2)

The Word “*Eternal*”

“Here are the opposite destinies.
The righteous will enter eternal
life in God’s joyous presence.
The unrighteous, however,
will be cast by God into hell.
Jesus paints a picture of hellfire
to warn his listeners of the pain
of God’s judgment.
When he speaks of ‘eternal fire,’
he means that the torments of
hell will have no end.
The Savior compassionately
warns his hearers of the
dreadfulness of eternal
punishment at God’s hands.”



Robert Peterson

1. Yes, a finite amount of sin has been committed against an infinite God.
2. Yes, people are not likely to become sinless in hell.
3. Yes, God made it this way.

Is It Fair for God to Punish Eternally?

1. Weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt 8:12; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30)
2. Unquenchable flames (Mark 9:43-48)

The Words “*Endless Destruction*”

“God has created a universe in which his mercy has meaning precisely because it does not nullify his justice.

In order for God to be just *and* extend mercy, he must keep his promise to punish transgression. In the Bible’s presentation of the true story of the world, God upholds justice at the cross and in hell...



James Hamilton

... Jesus died on the cross to establish God's justice and ensure that those who repent of sin and trust in Christ receive mercy that is also just. God punishes the wicked in hell to uphold justice against all who refuse to repent of sin, glorify him as God, and give thanks to him."



James Hamilton

⁹ And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he also will drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

Revelation 14:9-10

“A breath of relief is usually heard when someone declares, ‘Hell is a symbol for separation from God.’ To be separated from God for eternity is no great threat to the impenitent person. The ungodly want nothing more than to be separated from God. Their problem in hell will not be separation from God, it will be the presence of God that will torment them. ...



R.C. Sproul

... In hell, God will be present in the fullness of His divine wrath. He will be there to exercise His just punishment of the damned. They will know Him as an all-consuming fire.”



R.C. Sproul

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18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.

Romans 8:18-19

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

II Corinthians 5:21