

Wednesday

## Marveling at Jesus

**Today's Scripture** 2 Thessalonians 1:4–10

Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians has a familiar main theme for them—the study of last things. Paul taught them that they are to live life in light of the return of Jesus (1 Thessalonians 4:1–18). But they are not to be afraid of it, because it is a day when God intervenes and rescues those who belong to Him (1 Thessalonians 5:1–11).

The opening of Paul's second letter makes it clear that living “blameless” (1 Thessalonians 3:13) matters and is rewarded. But those who are persecuting God's people will experience punishment (vss. 5–10).

Paul is proud of those who maintain their faith in the face of persecution. That kind of “steadfastness and faith” and “enduring” (vs. 4) is “evidence” that they will be “worthy of the kingdom of God” (vs. 5). Paul is saying to the persecuted, “I am bragging about you; your faithfulness shows God will rescue you.”

But Paul also knows the Thessalonians wonder about persecutors who seem to escape punishment. So Paul highlights the judgment. This judgment takes place “when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven” (vs. 7). Jesus' return has all the awesomeness one might expect: the familiar “mighty angels” (vs. 7) and “flaming fire” (vs. 8) like many appearances of God in the O.T.

Jesus inflicts a repaying “vengeance” (vs. 6) on those who “do not obey the gospel” (vs. 8). The gospel is the story of Jesus and how He becomes the Messianic King. Persecutors are ignorant of God's character, that He is a revenger on those who harm His children.

Think about it: what greater joy could there be than to be in “the presence of the Lord and...the glory of his might” (vs. 9)? Conversely, what greater punishment could there be? To “marvel at” Jesus in His return is the greatest purpose and greatest pleasure of the Christians. Finally, we will see “the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:4).

**Today, I will...**...imagine the wonder and awe of seeing Jesus for the first time, and be strengthened by it.