



**God is Just**  
**2 Thessalonians 1:5-10**

People suffering unjustly ask: Why am I suffering? When will it end? Will justice be served? Paul answered these questions for the

Thessalonians to encourage them.

**Encouragement for Believers**

After Paul commended the Thessalonians for their growing faith, love and endurance, he encouraged them some more: (1) *Their suffering proved they were true believers.* Although they were being persecuted in the present, they would be rewarded in the future with God's kingdom. Their reaction to their suffering didn't save them but was evidence of the relationship they had with God through salvation. (2) *Their suffering would end.* Their suffering wouldn't last forever. In the future, God would give them relief from the suffering. The word translated relief also means rest and relaxation. Their reward in the kingdom of God would be eternal but their suffering was temporary. (3) *Their persecutors would be judged.* God is just and God would repay the persecutors with trouble for the trouble they caused. See Pharoah, Haman, and Daniel's rivals for biblical examples of God's retribution. God's justice is certain though not always swift or currently obvious. (4) *One day they would reflect the glory of God and marvel had what God had done.* One day when justice is served it will all make sense. We'll marvel at what God has done in the world and in us.

**Warning to Unbelievers**

Paul gave more details about God's judgment of the persecutors. (1) *Who* – Those who don't know God and those who don't obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These phrases probably refer to unbelieving Gentiles and Jews. The guilt of the latter is greater because their privilege is greater. (2) *What* – eternal destruction from the Lord's presence and from His glorious strength. The punishment will last for eternity (see Matt 25:46). "Presence" is literally "face." Christians will see Jesus' face (Rev 22:4). Unbelievers will never see his face. Unbelievers will also never experience God's glorious strength. (3) *When* – At the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with His powerful angels. This event is not the Rapture (1 Thes 4:13-18) for no judgement accompanies the Rapture. This is Jesus' second coming to the earth to judge and to rule (Ps 2:1-9; Matt 25:31; Rev 19:11-20:4).

**Warning to Believers**

The Thessalonians were suffering because of their faith and thus were persecuted unjustly. Peter teaches we shouldn't be surprised by this kind of suffering and in fact we should rejoice in it (1 Peter 4:12-14). However, Peter also warns we shouldn't suffer for being an evildoer (1 Peter 4:15). Paul warns we reap what we sow (Gal 6: 6-10). If we sow to our flesh, we will reap destruction from the flesh. Because we are saved from the eternal consequences of our sin doesn't mean we can sin without consequences. God will allow us to reap what we sow and discipline us if we are disobedient children (Heb 12:3-13). The disciples needed to learn to trust God in their storm. Jonah had to learn to obey God in his storm.